NEWS / A10

Filipina reported kidnapped in Nigeria shows up with husband at NBI alive and well

ACROSS / A17

Bayan Muna member shot dead in North Cotabato

WORLD / A26

UN report: World faces severe food, water shortages by 2100

NEWS / A2

Palace admits troops deployment in Metro, provincial campuses

Lights out in 10 years for incandescent bulb

WASHINGTON—A COALITION OF INDUSTRIALists, environmentalists and energy specialists is banding together to try to eliminate the incandescent light bulb in about 10 years.

In an agreement announced Wednesday, the coalition members are pledging to press for efficiency standards at the local, state and federal levels.

LIGHTS/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, March 15, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 96 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

SWS: GMA approval rating improves but still negative

HER APPROVAL RATING MAYBE IMPROVING but President Macapagal-Arroyo remains the country's least popular of four presidents since democracy was restored in 1986, an independent polling group said yesterday.

With nearly four of every 10 adult Filipinos (39 percent) satisfied with Ms Arroyo's performance and 43 percent dissatisfied, the President's net satisfaction rating stood at -4, a recent survey

SWS: GMA/ A21

CLASS ACT: Class 2007 of the Philippine Military Academy has three women in the top 10. Topping the class is Cadet Adrelee Mojica here being carried by female classmates. *(Photo and names of the top 10 graduating cadets on Page A12.)*

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Woman No. 1 mistah of PMA Class 2007

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—FOR THE third time in 10 years, the valedictorian of the Philippine Military Academy's graduating class is a woman.

Cadet First Class Andrelee Mojica of Indang, Cavite, topped PMA Maragtas (Marangal na Tagapagligtas) Class of 2007. "It is an honor to represent the women of our country," she said.

Mojica, 23, intends to join the Philippine Navy after graduation on March 19. She is the third female PMA cadet to graduate as valedictorian since 1997, after Arlene de la

WOMAN/ A12

PMA cadets receive monthly stipend of P15,000 each

By Joselle dR Badilla
Inquirer Mindanao

MARAGTAS CLASS 2007 OF ASIA'S PREMIER MILitary school is composed of 288 members, of whom only 282 are tentatively listed to graduate on March 19.

The 282 completed their Officer's Preparatory Course (OPC) in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija, in the first week of this month.

Only 183 out of the 282 are original members of

PMA CADETS/ A12

Drug use funding rebels

US admiral says 'shabu' labs in NPA, MILF areas

MILLIONS OF DOLLARS GENERATED BY DRUG USE MAY be finding their way into the hands of communist and Moro rebels in the Philippines, according to the head of a US antidrug task force unit in Southeast Asia.

Rear Admiral Paul Zukunft of the US Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-West said there were indications that secret laboratories for producing methamphetamine (shabu) were now operating in areas where Maoist and Moro rebels have a strong presence.

"That's one of our biggest concerns," Zukunft told Reuters during a break in meetings with Filipino counterparts at the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA).

He said a significant portion of revenues in drug trade was funding rebel activities.

"It's not just drug users. It's the revenues that are generated by drug use. We do know it's in the tens of millions of dollars and there's a very sophisticated money-laundering scheme that goes with that," Zukunft said.

The US government has been funding training and information exchange programs with countries in Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, to track where drugs are going and to stop them.

"It's much easier to stop them at the source than waiting for them to go into global distribution," said Zukunft, who is based at the US Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii.

Dionisio Santiago, a former Armed Forces chief of staff who now heads PDEA, said rebels were believed to have turned to the illicit drug trade because the global war on terrorism had cut foreign fund inflows to Islamic militants and communist rebels.

"We have been able to reduce the supply of

DRUGS/ A8

Loren tops poll; Roco zooms up

NINE SENATORIAL CANDIdates on the opposition slate, six candidates on the administration ticket and two independent candidates would have a "statistical chance" of winning a seat in the Senate if elections were held in the first week of the month, according to a survey by Pulse Asia Inc.

Sonia Roco (22.4 percent), Vicente Magsaysay (22.4 percent) and Michael Defensor (21.3 percent) were the new names that made it to the list of "probable

LOREN/ A21

TOO LATE TO EXIT: Shortly before he was shot dead, Almario Villegas opened a second-floor window while holding on to his .22 cal. pistol and a hand grenade. He was attempting to join a cop friend on the ground, who had offered to drive him away from the crime scene during the negotiations for the hostages' release.

REM ZAMORA

Cash, car ready for hostage-taker but . . .

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Julie M. Aurelio

THE P1.3-MILION CASH HE HAD DEmanded was ready. So was the silver car he had intended to use for his getaway.

But little did Almario Villegas realize that the four hostages he had been keeping in a second floor room of the Taguig City Justice Hall since Tuesday had slipped away.

When the 43-year-old ex-Marine and movie stuntman finally stepped out of the room to look for them yesterday, a police SWAT team waiting at the corridor opened fire, ending a 23-hour hostage drama in a blaze of gunshots and a grenade explosion.

"Thank God, the crisis is over," said Philippine National Police Director Reynaldo Varilla as Villegas lay lifeless on the floor, his thighs shattered by the grenade blast, which also pierced his face and body with shrapnel.

"We exhausted all means to peacefully resolve the crisis, to make sure nobody will get hurt. But we cannot avoid what happened," added Varilla, head of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO).

The four hostages—a lawyer and three women—were all rescued. Villegas' live-in partner, who was with him during the hostage drama, has been taken into police custody.

No one among the heavily armed members of the Special Weapons and Tactics was hurt.

It was not immediately clear if Villegas

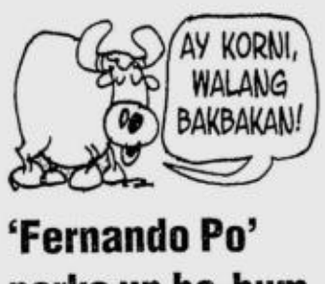
CASH/ A10

RANK	SENATORIAL BETS	%
1	Legarda, Loren	56.80
2-3	Lacson, Panfilo	41.10
2-6	Pangilinan, Francis	39.40
3-9	Escudero, Francis	35.50
3-10	Recto, Ralph	35.20
3-10	Villar, Manuel	35.00
4-10	Arroyo, Joker	34.50
4-10	Aquino, Benigno "Noynoy" III	34.20
4-10	Angara, Edgardo	32.10
5-11	Cayetano, Alan Peter	30.90
10-12	Honasan, Gregorio "Gringo"	27.30
11-17	Sotto, Vicente "Tito"	25.40
12-18	Pimentel, Aquilino "Koko"	23.10
12-18	Magsaysay, Vicente	22.40
12-18	Roco, Sonia	22.40
12-18	Osmeña, John Henry	21.90
12-18	Defensor, Michael	21.30
13-18	Zubiri, Juan Miguel	19.20
19-22	Montano, Cesar	15.10
19-22	Coseteng, Anna Dominique	13.90
19-22	Pichay, Prospero	13.70
19-22	Gomez, Richard	13.10
23-24	Trillanes, Antonio	9.90
23-26	Oreta, Teresa Aquino	9.10
24-27	Cayetano, Joselito	7.10
24-27	Singson, Luis "Chavit"	6.50
25-29	Atienza, Arturo	5.80
27-32	Chavez, Melchor	4.10
27-32	Wood, Victor	4.10
28-46	Bautista, Martin	2.70
28-46	Kiram, Jamalul	2.50
28-50	Lozano, Oliver	2.40

SOURCE: PULSE ASIA, INC.
INQGRAPHIC: KATE PEDROSO, LOUIE BACANI

EDWIN BACASMAS

COMIC RELIEF: An angry Manuel Azcuna Po aka Fernando Po and Lapu-Lapu Ferdinand Jr. barges in on the Senatorial Forum at the Manila Hotel and confronts moderator Babes Romualdez (center) for not inviting him.



'Fernando Po' perks up ho-hum election debate

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora

NO SPARKS FLEW AT THE much-ballyhooed first public debate between administration and opposition senatorial candidates.

The only memorable part of the

FERNANDO/ A10

RP activists testify for US Congress HR hearings

WASHINGTON—AS THE NUMber of activists murdered in the Philippines rises, Bishop Eliezer Pascua says no one can feel safe when speaking out about political matters in his country.

Pascua, in testimony prepared for a congressional hearing Wednesday (today in Manila), said more than 830 activists are estimated to have been killed since 2001, when Gloria Macapa-

RP ACTIVISTS/ A10

EZ2 (12) (27) | FOUR DIGIT (3) (6) (0) (4)

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening (6) (2) (2) | (6) (5) (8)

(All in exact order)

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao and Eastern Visayas will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Rains

COMPILED BY: LAW DE GUZMAN, INQ RESEARCH/03/14/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Reservists join urban patrol

By Kristine L. Alave

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES ANnounced yesterday it was expanding its counterinsurgency and peace and order operations in the capital with the deployment of 5,000 reservists to reinforce soldiers deployed in urban slums.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, commanding general of the National Capital Region Command, said the reservists would participate in the AFP's civil-military programs in Metro Manila.

"The reservists are a formidable force. They are already embedded in the community," Dolorfino said in a media briefing at Club Filipino.

Dolorfino's announcement coincided with a news briefing by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita during which concerns by leftist groups about military presence in the capital in the absence of a martial law declaration were raised.

"We will remind the AFP to pull out the troops as soon as possible because their presence is becoming too obvious," Ermita said in Filipino. "I'm sure the AFP leadership will reconsider," said Ermita, a former general and AFP chief of staff.

Dolorfino, who issued the order for the deployment of reservists on Saturday, said their primary duty under the Mamamayang Kawal program was to help in disaster preparedness and prevention programs in their communities. He added that reservists who are lawyers and doctors would provide free legal assistance and medical examinations to urban slum residents.

He said the reservists would augment the 26 military teams composed of 260 personnel fielded to patrol and engage in antileftist information campaign in poverty-stricken areas in Metro Manila under the military's Community Development program.

"Yes, it's a sister program. They are mutually supportive," Dolorfino said.

The military's presence in the urban areas has been assailed by leftist and human rights groups who say the practice harks back to the martial law period and to "saturation drives" and intimidation campaign by retired Maj. Gen. Jovelito Palparan, blamed by a fact-finding commission for alleged extrajudicial executions in the regions where he had been assigned.

Renato Reyes, secretary general of left-wing Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said the AFP was militarizing the urban areas and weeding out members of progressive groups in the "guise of civic action."

He said armed soldiers had been urging residents not to vote left-wing party-list organizations.

But Dolorfino said the military has "noble intentions" in its deployment of reservists. He added that the military has a duty to conduct outreach programs to civilians—a move welcomed by some residents in crime-ridden slum districts.

"This is really a harmless approach. We are not targeting certain people. We are targeting problems," the official noted.

Dolorfino said the military teams were conducting education campaigns to eliminate "bad ideas" in the communities. He said he was hopeful that the military's socialization initiative would strengthen the public's support for the Armed Forces.

AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. has said that the soldiers deployed will be unarmed. He says that the military personnel are directed to arrest criminals, drug dealers and communist rebels suspected to be hiding in some areas in the city. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

2 LP factions told to submit papers

THE COMMISSION ON ELECtions yesterday ordered the two feuding factions of the Liberal Party to submit position papers on their party's constitution so the Supreme Court can determine which of the factions was legitimate.

The Comelec gave the rival factions led by Sen. Franklin Drilon and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza two days to submit evidence to show that certain amendments to the LP charter, also called the Salonga Constitution, had indeed been ratified.

The Comelec said that if it did not receive the evidence in two days it would be presumed that the amendments to the LP charter had not been ratified.

The party's charter was formulated when the LP was led by former Senate President Jovito Salonga.

Drilon claimed that amendments which he and Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza sponsored were ratified by LP members, which allowed him to succeed Rep. Florencio Abad as president in July 2004 when the latter was named education secretary.

Atienza, who leads a rival faction, contends however that the terms of Drilon and other party officials had expired in July 2005. He called party members to a convention in March 2006, and was elected new president. *Jerome Aning*

Palace admits 'culture of corruption'

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG OFFICIALS YESTERDAY ACknowledged that "a culture of corruption" was prevalent in the country but that the Arroyo administration has been taking significant steps to fight the scourge in the bureaucracy.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo, presided at a press briefing yesterday to contest a survey released on Tuesday by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (Perc) saying foreign businessmen regarded the Philippines as Asia's most corrupt economy.

Ermita and Saludo said it was a matter of perception versus reality, insisting that the situation on the ground was not that bad, and that there has been much improvement.

"There are other surveys of other agencies showing improvement in the Philippines. The Arroyo administration has something to brag about ... to prove that in spite of destabilizations, our ship of state is on even keel," said Ermita.

Bunye said that compared to its predecessors, the Arroyo government "has undertaken a strong and steady effort to curb graft through criminal justice, administrative controls and procedural reforms."

Bunye pointed to the records of the antigraft bodies like Office of the Ombudsman, Sandiganbayan and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission which "are there for all to see."

"And they certainly reflect an earnest effort by a government out to make a deep dent on corruption to drive greater confidence in our political and economic stability," he said.

Bunye explained that the government's anticorruption drive was focused on three areas— graft-prone revenue agencies such as the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs, agencies that are on the front line of day-to-day public services and local government units that tended to be "out of the anticorruption radar in the past."

"Results have been gained and reforms are being made although we realize that the Philippines has to deal with negative perceptions that are still rooted in the past," Bunye stressed.

He said the culture of corruption was something that had "crept into several areas of Philippine society and politics over many decades."

Saludo said that much of the perception that the Philippines was more corrupt than other countries was because of the freedom enjoyed by Philippine media.

He said perceptions were affected by what the media reported.

He noted that China and Vietnam, where media was subject to tight censorship, fared well in the survey.

"Here in our country, the media is free to report everything that's happening," he said.

Ermita said that local businessmen and foreign chambers knew "how things are in the Philippines," citing Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Donald Dee who said that the "situation is not that bad .. and they can see improvements."

Ermita and Saludo cited past surveys by the Social Weather Stations and other polling agencies showing that the corruption index went down dramatically from 2000, when President Joseph Estrada was in power.

"You go back to the previous administration if you can find a list in terms of high officials sacked in a year," said Saludo.

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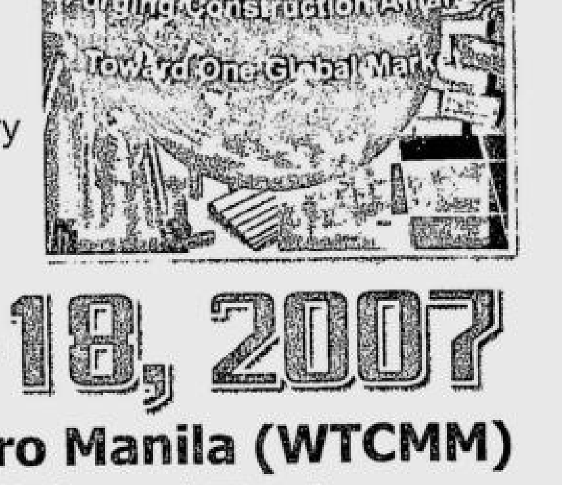

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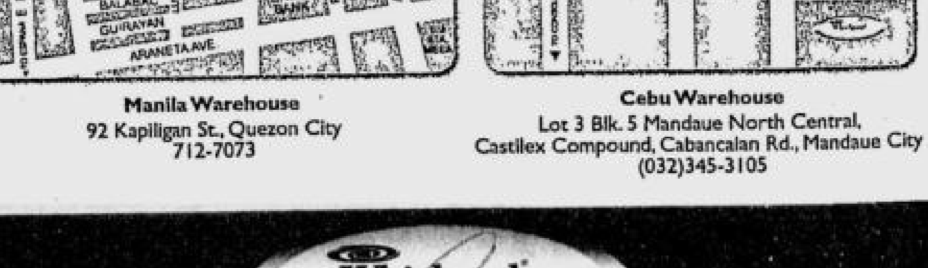

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No.0815 Series of 2007

El Niño on way out, but here comes La Niña

THE DROUGHT-CAUSING EL NIÑO WEATHER pattern has receded, but its flip side, La Niña, might return and affect the Philippines, a senior meteorologist said yesterday.

"El Niño is gone as shown by the return to neutral conditions in the Pacific Ocean," Nathaniel Cruz, head of the weather branch of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, told Reuters by phone.

Cruz, however, said his office was monitoring the possible development of the rain-laden La Niña weather pattern in the next two to three months as suggested by other international meteorological centers.

Last week, the US Climate Prediction Center of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration said La Niña may form in the equatorial Pacific in the next two to three months.

"It is not 100-percent definite that La Niña will come in after El Niño," Cruz said, adding the Philippines was in the midst of its summer which runs from March to early May.

About 20 typhoons hit the Philippine archipelago each year, mostly during the rainy season that usually starts in late May and normally lasts until September.

Cruz said Mindanao experienced below-normal rain in November and December due to what meteorologists described as a mild El Niño.

On the other hand, wide areas in Luzon and Visayas were battered by a series of strong typhoons since September. *Reuters*

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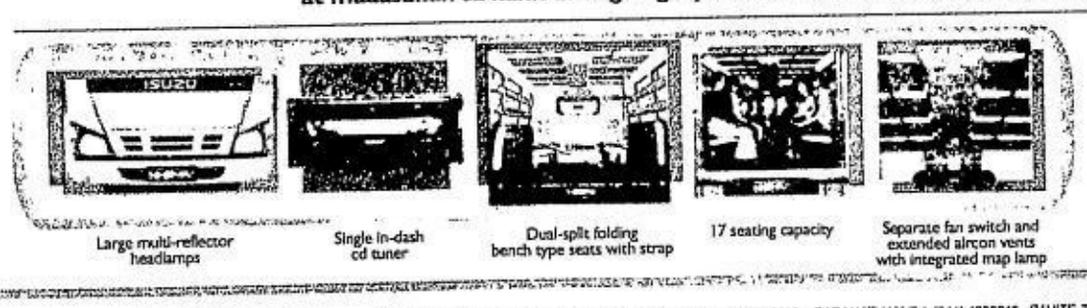

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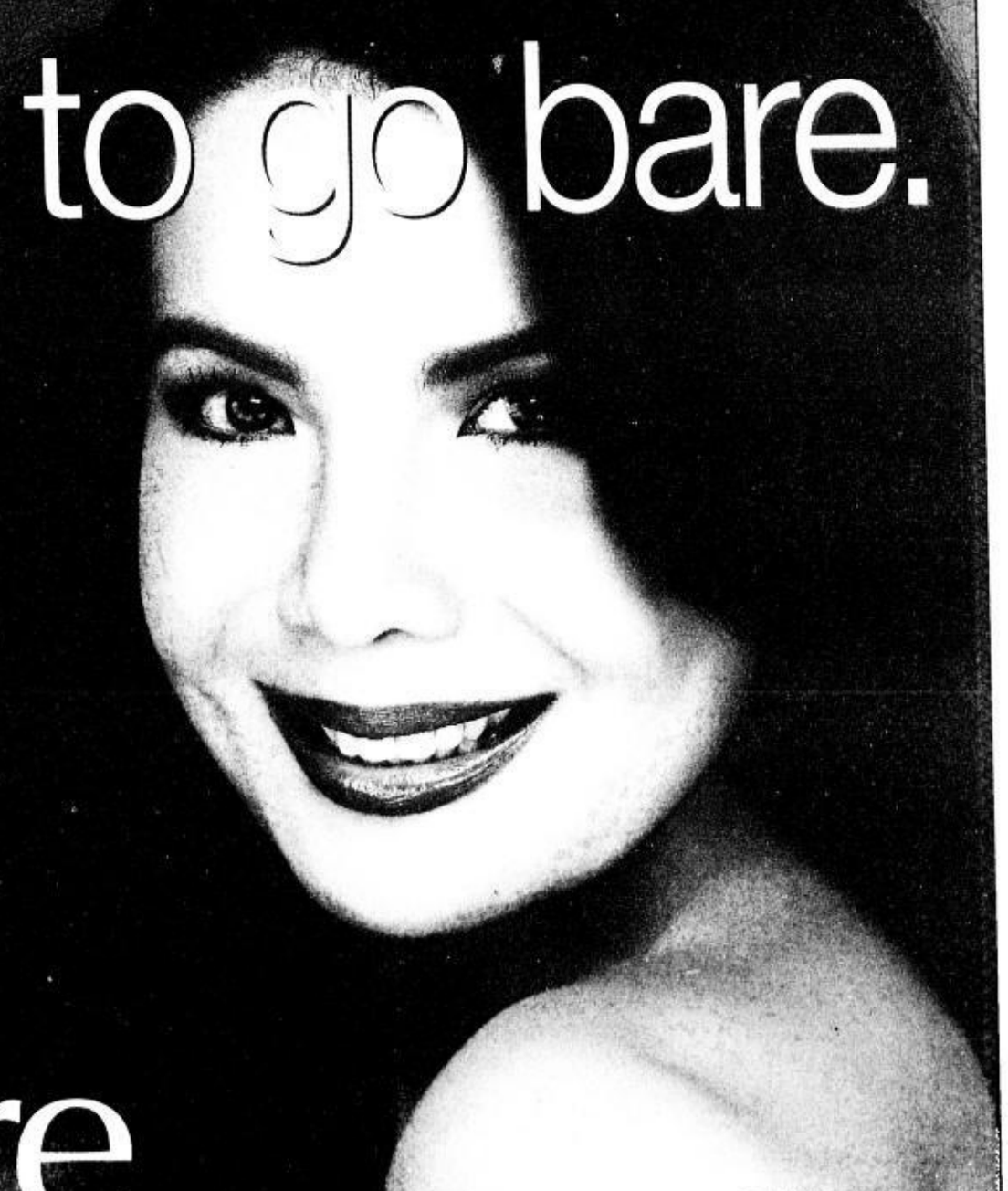

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Open Access & Greater Retail Competition in the Power Sector

The Consumer & Oil Price Watch (COPW) met with President Arroyo, ERC Chairman Rodolfo Albano, and Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla to discuss proposals that will enable the Philippines to attract more local and foreign investors in the power sector so that **ALL** will benefit from lower electricity rates on **January 2008 - especially the poor.**

PSALM to fast-track privatization schedule in 2007 & 2008 under the EPIRA Law for open access by 2008

The Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) mandates retail competition and open access three years after its effectivity in 2001.

Open access that should have been enjoyed by consumers since 2004 **has been delayed for three years now** because these **2 preconditions** have not been met:

PRECONDITION 1: The privatization of 70% of NPC owned & operated plants totaling 5,318 MW rated capacity.

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has already privatized or sold **480 megawatts** (MW) of NPC owned & operated plants.

This year, PSALM will auction off **2,724 MW** in the first semester and an additional **1,500 MW** in the second semester.

This will bring up the total of privatized assets to **4,713 MW** or **81%** - exceeding the **70% requirement** of NPC generating capacity of **5,318 MW** under the EPIRA Law.

January - June Auction Dates	
Calaca 1 & 2	600 MW
Masinloc 1 & 2	600 MW
Bataan Thermal	225 MW
Manila Thermal	200 MW
Tiwi Geothermal	275 MW
Makban Geothermal	410 MW
Angat Hydro	246 MW
Illijan 1 & 2 Diesel	114 MW
Cebu 2 Diesel	54 MW
TOTAL:	**2,724 MW**

July - December Auction Dates	
Sucat Oil Thermal	850 MW
Mirant 1 & 2 Diesel	310 MW
Palinpinan Geothermal	192.5 MW
Tongonan Geothermal	112.5 MW
Bohol Diesel	22 MW
General Santos Diesel	22 MW
TOTAL:	**1,500 MW**

COPW's position is for the power generation sector to first be DE-MONOPOLIZED and an independent IPP administrator must be established in order to ensure fair market competition.

PRECONDITION 2: The transfer of management and control of at least 70% of the total energy output of NPC plants with IPP (independent power producer) contracts to IPP administrators, under Section 51c of the EPIRA Law.

PSALM is empowered to take title to and possession of the NPC-IPP contracts and, **after public bidding in a transparent and open manner**, appoint qualified independent entities to act as IPP administrators that will manage and control the NPC-IPP plants until their contracts have expired.

In October 2004, PSALM has hired an ADB-funded consultant to recommend terms and conditions for the bidding of would-be IPP administrators.

THE ISSUE OF REGULATORY LAG OR DELAYS IN THE PROCESS OF APPROVING RATE ADJUSTMENTS MUST BE ADDRESSED WITH FINALITY

The Supreme Court order of stopping the automatic adjustment in the generation charge of NPC, TRANSCO, & Power Generators which are merely pass-on charges causes **"traffic jams"** as monthly petitions for price adjustments upwards or downwards must go through the process of publication and public hearing.

The Supreme Court has **singled out** MERALCO from implementing the **automatic monthly** adjustment of the generation charge while **other** distribution utilities **are allowed.**

COPW, in its letter to ERC Chairman Albano on January 15, expressed the need to address this concern in light of MERALCO's claim for cumulative under-recoveries totaling **P13.73 billion as of January.**

COPW met with MERALCO officials and asked that the **under-recoveries be staggered into 12 equal monthly installments** with a carrying charge equivalent to the 91-day T-Bill rate plus 300 points.

COPW is awaiting the letter of the DOE that will shorten the regulatory lag that is acceptable to the ERC without seeking the permission of the Joint Congressional Power Commission.

COPW appeals to PSALM, DOE, NPC, ERC, DOF, & the Office of the President to fast track compliance with the 2 preconditions in the EPIRA Law.

This will ensure TRUE market competition in the power sector and faster power rate reduction for ALL -Industrial, Commercial & Residential but MOST OF ALL THE POOR who enjoy a subsidy on the first 100 kwh consumption and may enjoy an increased subsidy of 200 kwh in 2008.

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to **http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/**

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It's a go for Cesar Montano

By Cynthia D. Balana

AFTER ALMOST A WEEK OF SPECULATION about his possible withdrawal from the senatorial race, popular actor Cesar Montano announced yesterday he has decided to stay on as a candidate with the administration's Team Unity.

In a press conference at Anabel's Restaurant in Quezon city, a teary-eyed Montano admitted that he had considered withdrawing from the slate but changed his mind after his teammates chipped in to fund his ad campaign, and his family boosted his morale.

"*Hindi ko ide*-deny *iyan. Nakapag-isip isip ako. Nagpalakas ng loob ko ang* Team Unity (I will not deny [that I was considering withdrawing]. But I have had time to think. the other members of Team Unity boosted by morale)," he said, referring to the gesture of all Team Unity candidates of chipping in money to bankroll his campaign after learning of his financial constraints.

He did not say how much, but said it was enough for him to realize that he was part of a team and a concerned citizen. He also belied reports that Malacañang had promised him P200 million to join the team.

"Whatever happens, with or without money, I will not turn back," Montano said in Tagalog.

Asked if his meeting with the President last Monday had something to do with his decision to continue his senatorial bid, Montano said the President was always a big factor, but that it was his wife, actress Sunshine Cruz, and his family who provided him the moral boost.

It's okay if I don't win, I'm not trying to be a hero but our country has many immediate problems. My own problem with the TV ads, that's just a material problem. This is a Team Unity in a real sense. There is solid camaraderie. They saw I had problems and they helped me," he said in Tagalog.

Still, Montano could not hold back his shock over the amount of money being spent to fund a political campaign. If he had his way, he quipped, he would just donate that kind of money to a charitable cause.

Earlier, Montano complained of lack of funds to support a television ad campaign which could cost some P30 million. He realized he needed the TV ads to generate awareness among voters that he was a senatorial candidate and not just the entertainer-guest at the rally.

GO presents 10-point economic plan

NEARLY HALFWAY INTO THE CAMPAIGN, the Genuine Opposition yesterday announced its official economic platform which includes more job generation, cheaper power and medicines and no new taxes.

The GO, accused by President Macapagal-Arroyo as lacking in platform, presented its 10-point economic program in keeping with its campaign slogan as anti-corruption fighters and watchdogs.

GO also vowed to block any attempt to amend the Constitution by whatever mode.

Based on its platform, GO will sponsor and support legislative initiatives that would: generate more jobs through labor-intensive infrastructure projects in the rural areas; increased budgetary allocations for education at all levels; substantially lower the cost of medicines; lower the costs of transportation and power through the development of domestic sources of renewable energy; reject any new tax and improve tax administration; grant prosecutorial powers to the Commission on Human Rights and de-emphasize the heavily militarist approach in counter-insurgency; contribute to the arrest of global warming; organize additional support programs for overseas Filipino workers; reinforce the role of the press as watchdog against graft and corruption by decriminalizing libel and increasing penalties for harm done to news persons; and institute other meaningful economic reforms. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

NEWSBRIEFS

Koko's Mindanao Agenda

ONLY A FINAL AND LASTING PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN REBEL groups and the government can spur growth in Mindanao, opposition senatorial candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III said yesterday.

"Peace must be achieved by nonviolent means at all costs. No shooting wars since the casualties are all Filipinos—soldiers, rebels and civilians. There is no point in killing each other," said Pimentel, the lone opposition candidate from Mindanao as he presented his Mindanao Agenda.

"The people of Mindanao are craving for peace, economic growth, education and jobs. They should be given opportunities to achieve these," he said. A lasting peace will entice investors to create industries in Mindanao, resulting in employment and development, he said.

Pimentel said that once elected to the Senate, he will focus on creating legislation to bring economic growth to Mindanao.

Sotto cites Senate record

FORMER SEN. TITO SOTTO YESTERDAY DUBBED AS UNFAIR CRITICS' ALLEGAtions that his senatorial bid under the Team Unity is anchored solely on a celebrity status resulting from an enduring career on television and entertainment.

Citing his record as a senator, Sotto said the criticism "is patently misleading and is a bungled attempt at diminishing the record of my public service both in the Senate and at the local government level." He said his detractors have resorted to this tactic for lack of a platform or a program to offer, he said in a press statement.

Sotto pointed out that he was the founder and first president of the Vice Mayors' League of the Philippines when he was vice mayor of Quezon City. The achievement, he said required serious political leadership.

Sotto also said his work at the Senate involved pieces of legislation that called for extensive efforts at getting the consensus of other legislators. He reiterated that he was the principal author of the the law on Optical Media, which sought to curb piracy in the country, and the bill that enabled qualified Filipinos abroad to vote. He said he also authored legislation which boosted the telecommunication, information technology, agriculture, fisheries and tourism sectors in the country.

"I worked hard in the Senate. I did not merely bask in the limelight," Sotto said.

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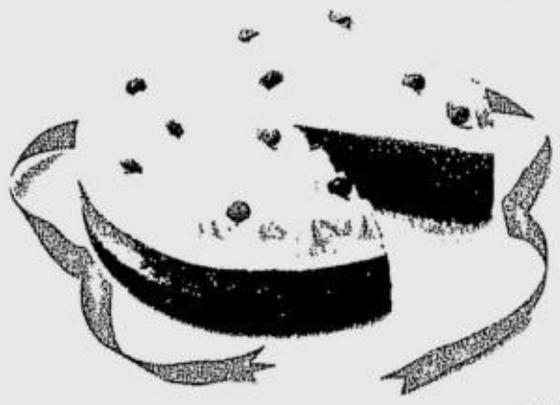

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The Board of Foreign Service Examinations of the Department of Foreign Affairs announces the holding of the –

FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER (FSO) EXAMINATION

to recruit candidates for appointment to the position of Foreign Service Officer Class IV (FSO IV).

The Examination is composed of three (3) parts which will be held on the following dates:

Qualifying Test:	6 May 2007
Written Examination:	22, 23 and 24 August 2007
Oral Examination:	To be determined at a later date

IMPORTANT:

(1) Application forms and relevant information regarding the examination may be downloaded from the Department of Foreign Affairs website (**www.dfa.gov.ph**). Forms may also be obtained personally or requested through mail from the following offices of the Department of Foreign Affairs:

DFA Main Office: Board of Foreign Service Examinations, Department of Foreign Affairs, DFA Building, 2330 Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City ° Tels. (02) 834-3080, 834-3083 ° Fax (02) 551-5976

DFA RCO Lucena: 3rd Floor, Pacific Mall Lucena, M.L. Tagarao St., Barangay III, Lucena City ° Tels. (042) 710-4526 ° Fax (042) 373-1898 ° Email: dfarcolc@pldtdsl.net

DFA Mindanao and DFA RCO Davao City: Ebro-Pelayo Building, E. Jacinto Street, Davao City ° Tels. (082) 227-3900, 224-4885, 227-0713 ° Fax (082) 221-4552, 227-0712 ° Email: davaorco@ultimate.info.com.ph, davaorco@yahoo.com

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DFA RCO La Union: Pasado Building, Pagdalagan Norte, San Fernando, La Union ° Tels. (072) 888-3733, 888-3107 ° Fax (072) 888-5484 ° Email: dfalaunion@sflu.com, la_union@dfa.gov.ph

DFA RCO Clark Field: Balikbayan Shopping Mall, Claro M. Recto Avenue, Clarkfield, Angeles, Pampanga ° Tels. (045) 599-7777 ° Fax No. (045) 599-6555 ° Email: pampanga@dfa.gov.ph

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(2) Application forms may also be obtained from the Regional Offices of the Civil Service Commission.

(3) Completed application forms together with the documentary requirements must be returned to any of the DFA Regional Consular Offices enumerated above not later than **20 April 2007**, or to the DFA Main Office not later than **25 April 2007**, for evaluation and processing.

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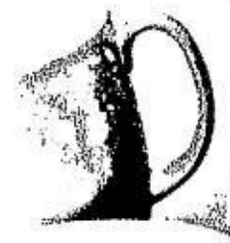

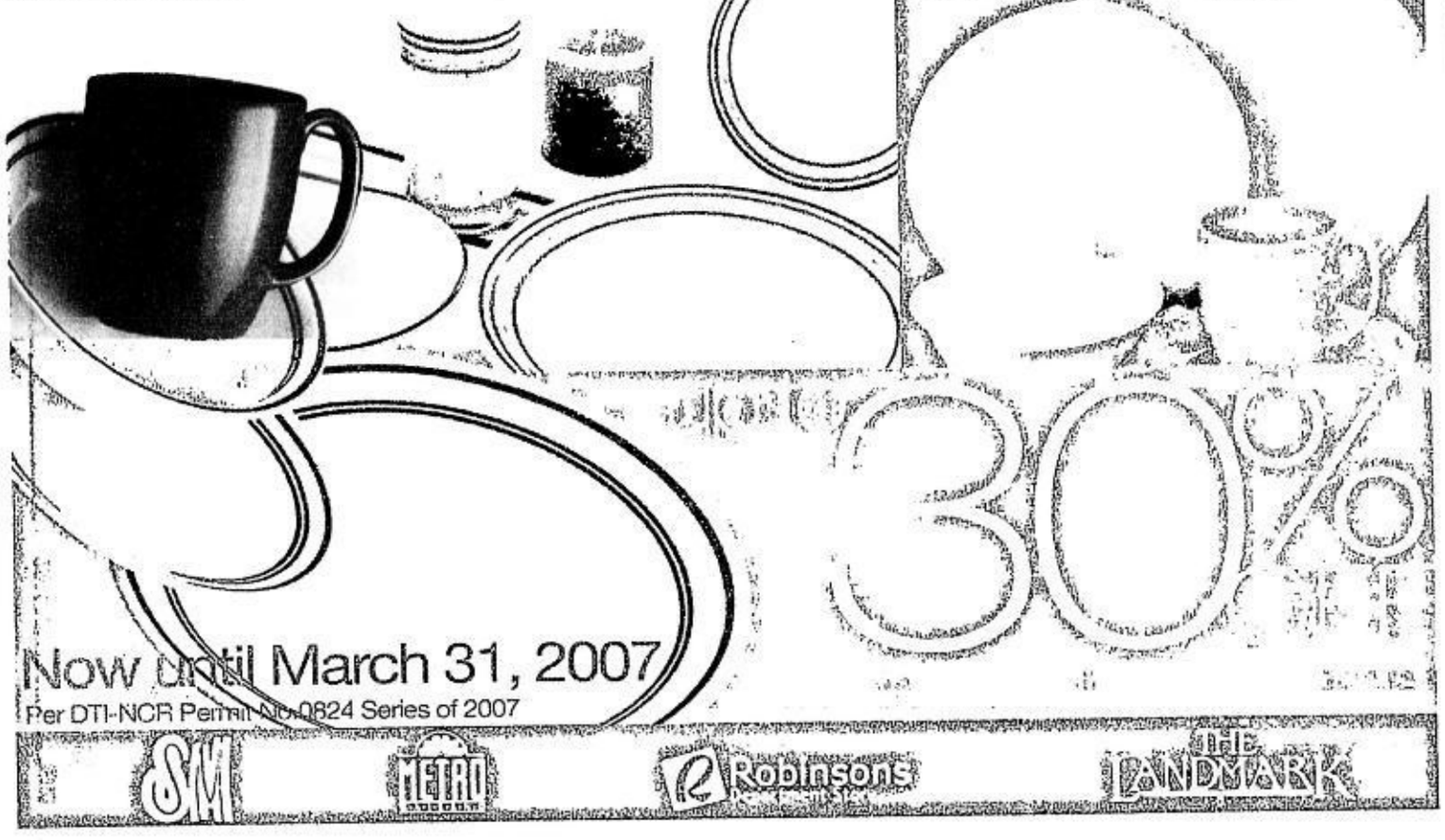

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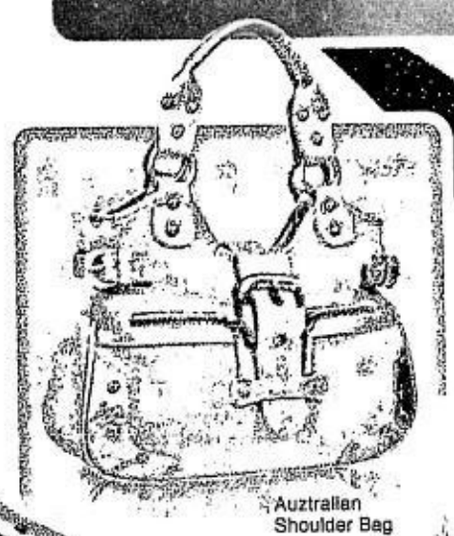

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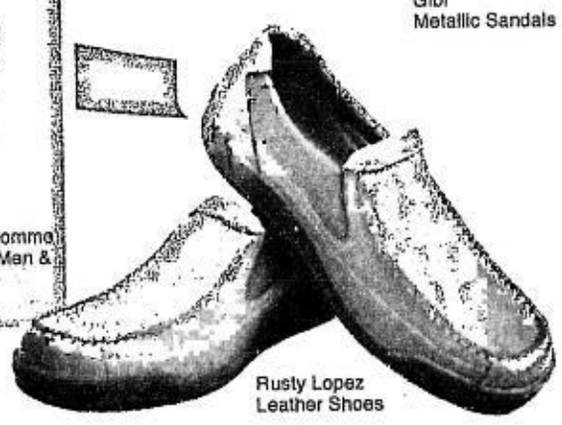

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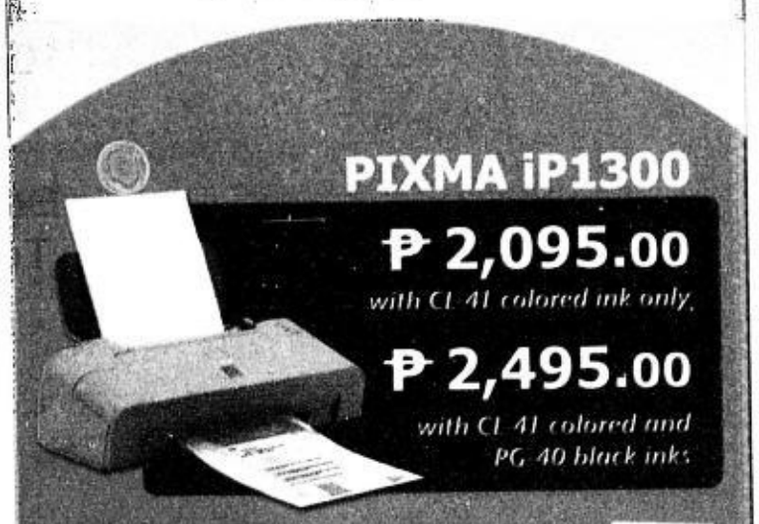

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PIXMA

Drugs funding rebels, says US admiral

From page A1

methamphetamine in Manila because of the series of drug busts in several clandestine laboratories in the capital since 2005," Santiago said.

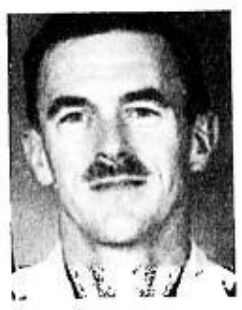
MILF area

"But, we've been getting reports new laboratories were being set up in remote areas in central Mindanao, near the hideouts of Muslim rebels," he said.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the largest Moro rebel group in Mindanao, controls the vast wetlands in Central Mindanao, where other Islamic militant groups are known to be taking shelter.

The shortage of methamphetamine supply has increased demand for marijuana, cultivated in the mountains in the northern Philippines, according to Santiago.

He said communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels were known to be controlling and protecting huge marijuana plantation sites in areas where they operate.



ZUKUNFT

"We still don't have estimates of how much money the NPA gets from marijuana growers in the mountain provinces," Santiago said.

He said the plant was now exported to Australia, Malaysia, Taiwan and Japan although domestic consumption was increasing.

Abu Sayyaf, too

The small militant group Abu Sayyaf, known to have links with Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaida, has also started cashing in on the drug trade, controlling traffic of smuggled drugs from its base in Jolo.

Santiago described Jolo as the country's main gateway to ingredients in making methamphetamine in secret laboratories in the Muslim Mindanao region.

Precursor chemicals for making methamphetamines, popularly known here as "shabu" were smuggled through Jolo from China by five huge transnational drug rings based in Taiwan and mainland China.

Another popular substance, called ketamine, used commonly as an anaesthetic for horses, was also smuggled from India for local processing and re-exported to Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan.

"It's not popular here yet because ketamine is expensive," Santiago said, adding the drug, also known as Kit Kat or Vitamin K, was popular among middle-level executives in wealthier countries. *Reuters*

IN THE KNOW

What Went Before

IN JULY 2003, PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo accused members of the communist New People's Army of growing marijuana to finance their rebellion after international funding had dried up, following the US and European Union's decision to put a terrorist tag on the group.

However, an official of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency later admitted it did not have hard evidence to support the claim.

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, countered that the military and police were the ones engaged in the illegal drug business. He, however, offered no evidence.

Previous raids on marijuana plantations in Benguet and Bacolod had been linked to the NPA. *Cyril L. Bonabente, INQUIRER Research*

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Para sa Mar. 16 draw, ang resibo ay kailangan may petsang Feb. 1, 2007 hanggang Mar. 15, 2007. I-text lang ang mga detalye ng inyong mga resibo sa mga susunod na paraan:

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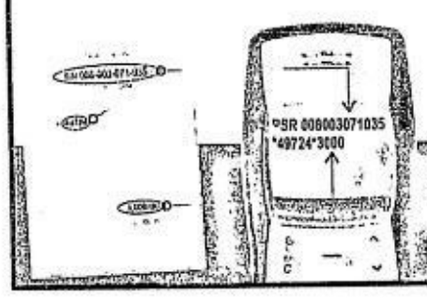
IMPORTANTE Huwag isama ang "," at sentimo.

Atty. Gregorio Cabantac BIR Deputy Commissioner Legal and Inspection Group awards the P1 Million check to Ms. Maria Theresa D. Salalac, housewife from Caloocan City. Assisting in the awarding ceremony is Mr. July Pena, PAGCOR representative.



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Lights out in 10 years . . .

From page A1

The standards would phase out the ordinary screw-in bulb, technology that arose around the time of the telegraph and the steam locomotive, and replace it with compact fluorescents, light-emitting diodes, halogen devices and other technologies that may emerge.

Compact fluorescents are three times as efficient as old-fashioned bulbs, and light-emitting diodes six times as efficient. These also last much longer.

The coalition members include Philips Lighting, the largest manufacturer; the Natural Resources Defense Council and two efficiency organizations.

Last Friday, European Union leaders said that European homes, offices and streets would have to use energy-efficient lighting by the end of the decade.

The decision to order a massive switchover that will affect the lives of all the EU's 490 million citizens came at a summit of the 27-nation bloc as part of an ambitious green energy policy to fight climate change.

4 billion sockets

But while they cost much less to run, they are more expensive to purchase, and getting home users to change the bulbs in the estimated 4 billion sockets in the United States would probably require eliminating the choice.

James E. Rogers, chief executive of Duke Energy and the co-chair of one of the efficiency organizations in the coalition, the Alliance to Save Energy, said: "Encouraging our customers to use advanced compact fluorescent light bulbs and other energy-efficient lighting is fundamental to our plans to meet growing demand for electricity as economically as possible."

The agreement is a compromise among the participants. Some favored an outright ban on incandescent bulbs, like the one that Australia said last month it would seek by 2009 or 2010.

Australia last month said it will be the world's first country to ban incandescent light bulbs in a bid to curb greenhouse gas emissions, announcing it would phase them out within three years.

Philips has pledged with others doing business in Europe to seek a shift to more efficient lighting there, too.

The Washington announcement will commit coalition members to seek "a market phaseout" by 2016.

General Electric has been campaigning against the elimination of incandescent bulbs, and promising instead to bring out a new model twice as efficient as its current bulbs.

GE has allied itself with the Natural Resources Defense Council in another group called the US Carbon Action Program, which seeks to control emissions of greenhouse gases through energy conservation.

Power in homes, office

Replacing incandescent lamps could slow the growth in greenhouse-gas emissions, but not radically.

The EU leaders asked the executive European Commission to come up with proposals for saving power in office and street lighting by 2008 and in homes by 2009.

The decision is a potential business opportunity for manufacturers such as Philips and Siemens-owned Osram but risks stirring Eurosceptical complaints about EU meddling in citizens' lives.

The summit set a target of increasing energy efficiency to save 20 percent of the EU's energy consumption by 2020 compared to projected use.

First in world

Incandescent lamps are traditional light bulbs which use a filament.

The European decision prompted a flurry of jokes including this from a British BBC radio reporter: "How many EU leaders does it take to change a light bulb. Answer: 27." *NYTNS, Reuters*

The 10th GSIS Scholarship Program

For nearly a decade, the GSIS has provided college grants to 368 scholars of GSIS members. In celebration of the program's 10th year, the GSIS is increasing the number of scholars to 200.

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You may also download the form through http://www.gsis.gov.ph and send it to your servicing GSIS office. Winners shall be determined through a computer-assisted raffle, to be witnessed by GSIS and COA representatives.

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Deadline for the submission of application is on April 30, 2007, at exactly 6:00 P.M. Entries will be raffled on May 2, 2007. Please visit www.gsis.gov.ph and e-mail the form to scholar@gsis.gov.ph. For more information, please call [illegible] at [illegible]

Kahit saan, kahit kailan, may kasahan

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, March 15, 2007
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jer 7:23-28
Gospel: Luke 11:14-23

One day Jesus was driving out a dumb demon. When the demon had been driven out, the mute person could speak, and the people were amazed. Yet some of them said, "He drives out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the chief of the demons." So others wanted to put him to the test by asking him for a heavenly sign.

But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every nation divided by civil war is on the road to ruin, and will fall. If Satan also is divided, his empire is coming to an end. How can you say that I drive out demons by calling upon Beelzebul? If I drive them out by Beelzebul, by whom do your fellow members drive out demons? They will be your judges then.

"But suppose I drive out demons by the finger of God; would not this mean that the kingdom of God has come upon you? As long as the strong and armed man guards his house, his goods are safe. But when a stronger one attacks and overcomes him, the challenger takes away all the weapons he relied on and disposes of his spoils.

"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me, scatters."

Commentary

Again and again comes the order, the plea: "Listen to my voice, let me be your God and you will be my people." But they fail, we fail, we do not pay heed and we turn our backs on God, instead of turning to face our God. When will we begin to listen to the prophets and stop being stiff-necked and doing even more evil than those who have gone before us? Are we the 'nation that does not listen to the voice of the Lord'? Are we the people who have banished even the word "faithfulness" from our speech and are in need of Jesus' rebuke to cast out the evils that we practice alongside our rituals: abortion, death penalty, war, murder, killing, violence, hate, nuclear weapons, disregard for the poor, the hungry, the immigrant, the illegal, the alien, the prisoner, the foreigner, the unemployed? Do we use our relationship with God to tell ourselves, "We are good—it's 'them' who are evil"?

Jesus knows our thoughts and turns on us, telling us that anyone 'who is not with me is against me and the one who does not gather with me scatters.' What if we are those people or we are the ones who refuse to take correction and stop the evil we are doing?

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 14 ISSUE, a story on Page A27 of the Metro section—"Property dispute angle eyed in killing of prominent trader"—misspelled the name of the businessman who was murdered recently in Malate. The victim was Federico Chuidian—not Chiudian—Delgado.

* * *

The same article erroneously described the victim's father, Francisco Delgado, as a former ambassador to the Holy See. It was Antonio—not Francisco—Delgado who had served as ambassador to the Vatican.

Julieta T. Valbuena; 89

JULIETA TUAÑO VALBUENA, widow of the late Miguel Valbuena, of Ozamiz City and New York City, died on March 11 at the Flushing Hospital in New York of cardiac arrest. She was 89.

She is survived by children Myrna Littleworth, Miguel, Marietta Chavez, Manuel and Melinda; brothers and sisters; children-in-law; grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Viewing is on Wednesday, March 14 at the St. Bartolomew Church in Queens, New York City. Cremation is set for March 15.

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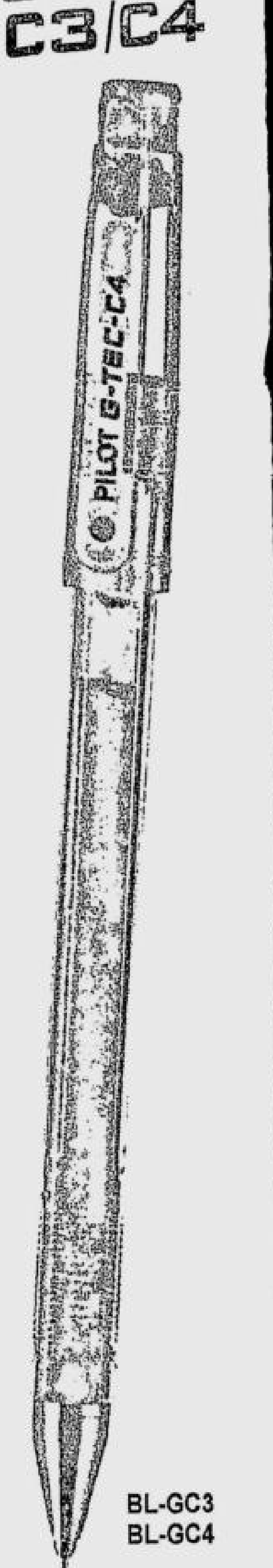

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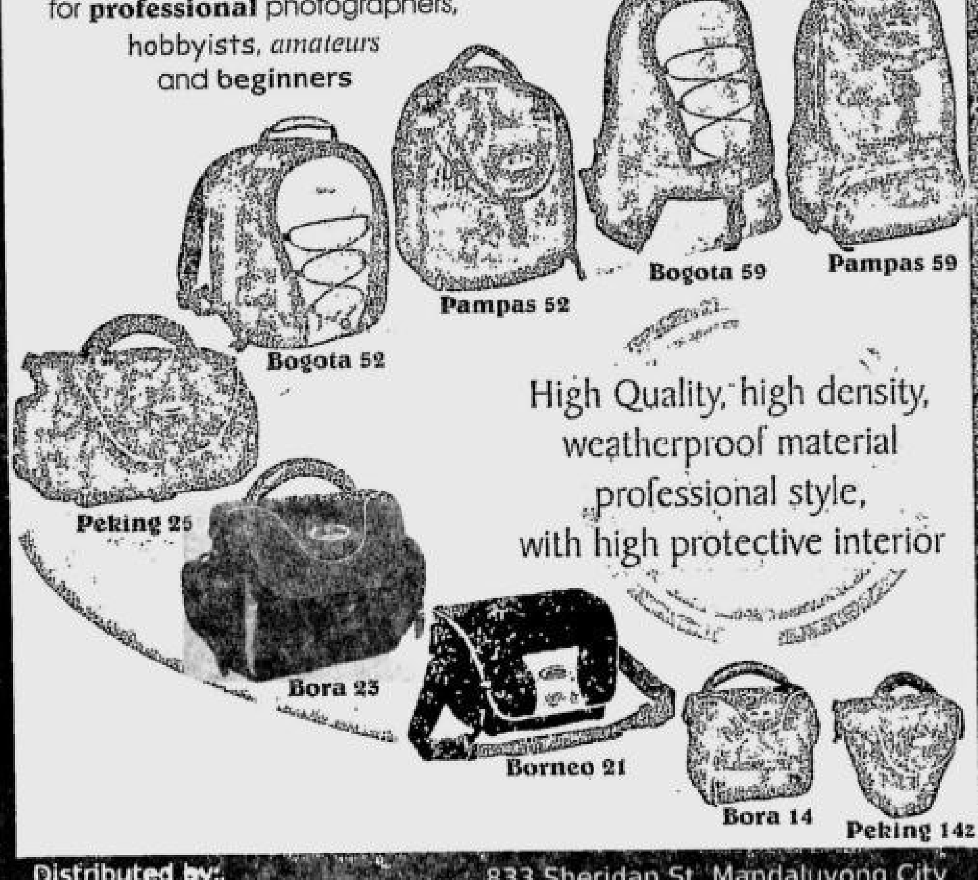

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TALE OF 2 HOSTAGES

MISSING PINAY IS NOT. Businesswoman Josiebeth Foroozan, who had been reported kidnapped in Nigeria by her Iranian husband Monouchehr (right) shows up at the office of NBI Director Nestor Mantaring on Wednesday. She keeps mum on why she dropped out of sight for more than a month. EDWIN BACASMAS

LAST HOSTAGE HOME: Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Esteban B. Conejos Jr. welcomes Filipino engineer Winston P. Helera upon arrival at the Naia on Tuesday night. JESS YUSON

RP activists testify for US Congress rights hearings

From page A1

gal-Arroyo became president. (The INQUIRER count is 295.) The victims include reporters, lawyers, doctors, teachers, students and priests.

Everyone, he said, is afraid.

"I admit that I have that fear," said Pascua, general secretary of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. "You can all imagine the chilling effect among the people."

The hearing before the Senate foreign relations subcommittee on Asia comes a day after Bayan, the largest left-wing group in the Philippines, asked US lawmakers to halt military aid to the country because of the killings of leftist activists.

The issue is a delicate one for the Bush administration. While eager to defend human rights around the world, Washington is the Philippines' closest military ally. It provides crucial training and intelligence support for Philippine military offensives against Islamic militants linked to the terror group al-Qaida.

The Arroyo administration has denied allegations by a UN human rights expert and its own fact-finding commission that soldiers were behind most of the killings of activists since 2001. Her office says the government is determined to uphold the rule of law.

Military officials have accused activists of links to communist rebels, who have waged a 38-year-old rural-based insurgency.

Another activist testifying at the hearing, Marie Hilao-Enriquez, secretary general of the rights group Karapatan, said rights violations in the Philippines had gotten worse under Ms Arroyo's leadership.

No distinction

The Arroyo administration's antiterrorist push "makes no distinction between armed guerrillas and unarmed activists, making the latter fair targets of political assassinations and abductions by suspected state-organized death squads," Enriquez said. "Arroyo's administration has curtailed civil liberties, disregarded human rights and international humanitarian laws and launched attacks on the people."

She called for international pressure on the Arroyo administration to stop the killing, torture, harassment, kidnapping and assault against activists.

In Manila yesterday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that the Arroyo administration had not received an invitation to send a representative to the Washington hearings.

Philippine Ambassador to the United States Willy Gaa has requested the US panels to allow a special team of Philippine government representatives to act as observers and resource persons but Ermita said Gaa had not yet reported to Manila on the status of his requests.

'There's nothing to hide'

Reacting to criticism by lawmakers in Manila that the US hearings constituted an affront to Philippine sovereignty, Ermita said: "I don't see why we should be oversensitive about this ... We are not against it because in the first place there's nothing to hide."

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, speaking to reporters during a call on Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno, defended the US hearings and said they were a sign that her country was interested in the Philippines.

"It shows how much Americans care about the Philippines and how much we pay attention to it. I think that's terrific," she said.

Kenney praised the Supreme Court's creation of 99 special courts to try and hear cases of killings of political activists and members of the media.

"I think having judicial mechanisms that allow these cases to be heard and tried is a good thing. It's up to the Philippines to determine how best to implement all these measures. But I think all of these are very useful in creating the right climate on rule of law," she said.

Int'l parliamentarians' visit

Also yesterday, Bayan Muna announced that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) will send two members of its human rights committee—Sen. Sharon Carstairs of Canada and Sen. Rosario Macias Green of Mexico—to look into rebellion charges against detained Rep. Crispin Beltran and the multiple murder case against Rep. Satur Ocampo, both members of the left-wing party.

The May visit shows that the international community, including foreign parliamentarians and human rights organizations, has become "very concerned about the ongoing political persecution and political killings in the Philippines," said fellow party-list Rep. Teddy Casiño.

"The world is really watching ... and seeing how this government is very brazenly violating the rights not only of members of its parliament but of its people as well," Casiño said.

Rebellion, murder charges

Beltran, Casiño, Ocampo and three other left-wing representatives were accused of rebellion in connection with a failed coup by mutinous soldiers last year. They have denied any involvement.

Government prosecutors last week filed multiple murder charges against Ocampo in connection with an alleged communist purge more than 20 years ago.

Ocampo said he was in military custody at the time and could not have been involved. He has promised to turn himself in after his lawyers finalize a petition with the Supreme Court challenging the charges and arrest warrants.

'Deep concern'

The IPU, based in Geneva, includes parliament members from 148 countries. It focuses on dialogues among parliaments and promotes peace, international cooperation and representative democracy.

Sweden's Anfers Johnsson, IPU secretary general, also sent an email to Bayan Muna on Tuesday saying he had written House Speaker Jose de Venecia to express "deep concern" over the case of Ocampo. *With reports from Leila B. Salaverria, Juliet Labog-Javellana, Christian V. Esguerra and Jocelyn R. Uy, AP*

'Fernando Po' perks up ho-hum election debate

From page A1

well-attended event held at the Manila Hotel was the outburst at the closing by a little-known candidate, Manuel Azcuna Po, aka Fernando Po and Lapu-Lapu Ferdinand Jr.

The man groused for nearly five minutes in front of the other candidates—who were posing for a group photo—about waiting in vain for more than two hours for his turn in the spotlight.

"At least he (Po) spoke his heart out and was passionate, unlike the candidates on stage," huffed a disappointed woman executive who declined to be named.

Philippines Inc. chair Miguel Varela, the lead organizer of the debate-turned-forum, had said the speakers should focus on "substance rather than form, issues rather than personalities, specifics and not generalities, practical road maps and not platitudes, and national perspectives and not shortsighted reactions."

But most of the reactors at the forum moderated by Babe Romualdez of the Manila Overseas Press Club agreed that the candidates did not air concrete proposals.

"Their ideas were not properly explained. But at least we got to know who knows their economics and who doesn't," Biznews Asia publisher Tony Lopez observed.

Said University of the Philippines professor Rene Azurin: "I think they should make their positions clear instead of making general statements. I think [the forum] reflects the fact that elections in this country are very rarely turned on issues but on personalities. But I think this is the fault of the electorate, and not the candidates."

Media mileage

Benjamin Diokno, a former finance secretary, said that some of the candidates were there for the "media mileage," and that they made the most of it by reinforcing what their political ads had pictured them to be.

For example, the Genuine Opposition's Sonia Roco said she was continuing the advocacy of her late husband, Raul Roco, against corruption.

The remarks of Team Unity's Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson were short and to the point, like the macho posturing of his ex-buddy, ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Singson also limited his comments to his area of expertise—local governance.

Asked why they were running for senator, Edgardo Angara and Francis Pangilinan cited their track records as lawmakers; Anna Dominique "Nikki" Coseteng said she wanted to fill a leadership crisis; and Michael Defensor said he wanted to make the Senate focus on lawmaking rather than investigating.

The forum did produce at least one positive note for Diokno—the candidates' concurrence on the problems facing the country, such as lack of governance, political stability and public infrastructure, and insufficient funds for health and education.

"They all realize that these are hurdles to economic growth, and we have to make up for that," said Diokno.

Best effort

But in the view of Cayetano Paderanga, a former socioeconomic planning secretary, the candidates came prepared and gave their best effort in what he called "a limited format."

"There were some direct questions on poverty alleviation and some of them were very concrete in their answers. They seem to have done their homework," Paderanga said.

Mike Toledo, president and CEO of Webber Shandwick Philippines, said Paderanga and Diokno, both members of the Estrada Cabinet, had been purposely invited to show the independence of the hosts.

Toledo said GO candidates like Roco agreed to take part in the event after being assured of fair treatment.

Still, the candidates played it safe for the entire event.

The only time they sparred with each other was when Team Unity's Prospero Pichay accused the opposition of preventing the economy from reaching higher levels, and GO's Coseteng retorted: "That is an unintelligent statement, to say the least. Surely, questioning the government is better than taking up arms."

2 tables

Earlier in the day, hotel employees set up two tables on stage.

One table was removed after organizers supposedly received word that GO campaign manager Sergio Osmeña III had enjoined GO candidates from attending.

"For there to be a debate, there should be two sides. How can there be a debate when only one side is represented?" said Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries chair Miguel Varela.

"We planned this with them. Some of [the GO candidates] were willing to participate, but they have their reasons for not [coming]," he said.

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, whom Osmeña had replaced as GO campaign manager, confirmed that it was the latter who said he'd prefer that the candidates not attend.

"It's a matter of principle. We want the debate to be done before the people, not before a select group such as businessmen. We fear that it will only be a setup," Ejercito said in a phone interview.

Ejercito said the business sector had traditionally allied itself with whoever was in power. "And we understand that because they are afraid of reprisals," he said.

But Varela said: "How can it be one-sided when we have an independent panel? We don't even know the questions they are going to ask.

"We even hired an events coordinator so that we can't be faulted for influencing the debate."

On their own

The GO candidates who showed up—Roco and Coseteng—did so on their own.

"I came here on the invitation of friends in the business sector. I don't even know if it is a debate, a dialogue or a forum. So I decided to come and see what it really will be," Coseteng told reporters.

Team Unity was represented by Angara, Pichay, Defensor, Singson and Miguel Zubiri.

GO campaign spokesperson Adel Tamano told reporters that while the camp's "general rule" was not to attend, it was not a marching order to the candidates.

"We gave them their freedom to choose, but as a principle, GO will not attend. If they do attend, it's okay. We do not take it against them," Tamano said.

He went on to claim that the debate on the true state of the economy was rendered moot after the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy announced that expatriate businessmen in the region had found the Philippines the most corrupt country in Asia.

PERC validates position

Tamano said the PERC survey validated their position that the Arroyo administration's claims of economic gains were "inaccurate and misleading."

Despite tepid reviews, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce, Employers Confederation of the Philippines, Philexport and Philippines Inc. remained keen on holding another business forum for the other senatorial candidates.

But there's no commitment that Po—who said he deserved to inform the public about his platform after running for senator thrice and for president once—would be invited. *With a report from Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

Cash, getaway car ready but hostage-taker killed

From page A1

was killed by police gunfire or by the explosion of the grenade he was holding.

"We had a lot of chance to neutralize him. We could have laced with ativan the glasses of water, juice and coffee which were delivered to him," Southern Police District Director Chief Supt. Roberto Gonzales also said.

But police were worried Villegas might suddenly release the grenade—its pin already removed—and kill all the hostages.

How it began

The crisis began at 2:40 p.m. Tuesday after Villegas, with his common-law wife, Delia de la Cruz, held hostage the four victims inside the courtroom of Regional Trial Court Branch 266 during a preliminary hearing of foreclosure proceedings on a house owned by De la Cruz.

De la Cruz had pawned her house and lot in Barangay Hagonoy for P300,000 years back. To be able to pay for it, she pawned it again to Gina Ramos, who had filed the foreclosure case because De la Cruz had not been paying her loan, city information officer Ana Santos said.

During the hearing, Villegas blew his top after Ramos refused any further delay in the proceedings.

Gun and grenades

The complainant Ramos sustained bruises in her face after Villegas allegedly slapped her several times during the hostage crisis.

Her lawyer, Frederick Vallestero, sustained a head wound after Villegas purportedly whipped him with his gun.

The two other hostages were court stenographer Liwanag Saloma and clerk of court Donna Lee Dunuan.

After the rescue, Dunuan's mother, Evelyn, said her daughter told her that Villegas kept telling his hostages that "*hindi nya sinasadya* (he hadn't planned it) and that he was just angry with the complainant Ramos and "he only wanted to release his ang[illegible]

Police said that Villegas had managed to slip a .22 cal. handgun and four hand grenades kept inside his bag into the closely secured Justice Hall located in front of the NCRPO Headquarters in Upper Bicutan.

"Seemingly, there was a lapse in the security," Varilla said.

Negotiations between the police and Villegas were conducted through cell phones and a special phone line installed in the courtroom.

Officials said that during the negotiations, Villegas asked for P3 million—which he later reduced to P1.3 million—for his girlfriend's property and for the safe release of the hostages.

"*Pera-pera lang ang labanan dito. Maghanda kayo ng P3 milyon sa loob ng dalawang oras, kung hindi papatayin ko si Gina* (This is a question of money. Have P3 million ready in two hours or I will kill Gina)," Gina's sister, Lilibeth Ramos-Cuevas, quoted Villegas as telling the family during a phone call yesterday morning.

Chief Justice comes

[illegible]less than Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno came and went inside the hall to promise Villegas a "speedy and fair trial," Taguig Mayor Freddie Tinga told reporters.

But Villegas flip-flopped on his demands.

As part of the deal, police said they also wrote and signed a manifesto promising Villegas he wouldn't be hurt.

Villegas agreed.

Under the deal, the hostage-taker's friend, SPO3 Jimmy Rondon, would escort him out of the Justice Hall and drive him back to Rondon's house in Cubao after he had surrendered his gun and grenades, according to Rondon.

But Gonzales later told reporters that based on the original plan, police would arrest Villegas once he released the hostages.

SWAT troops waiting

At about 1:30 p.m. yesterday, or minutes before the shooting erupted, reporters and bystanders saw Villegas open one of the windows on the second floor.

Below, his friend Rondon was starting the engine of a silver car.

Wearing a black bonnet and a red shirt, and still holding his gun and the grenade, Villegas appeared as if he was preparing to jump out of the window as Rondon waved at him.

Villegas did not know that at that time, the hostages were already being escorted out of the room. Three teams of SWAT members were also waiting outside the room.

Villegas suddenly disappeared from the window and apparently went back to where he had been keeping his hostages. He had apparently sensed his hostages had slipped away.

'Asian Treasures'

Seconds later, gunshots rang, followed by a single, loud explosion.

It was still unclear if Villegas had intentionally let go of the grenade or if it had accidentally slipped from his hands during his fall after he was hit by gunfire.

Supt. Alfred Corpus, Taguig police chief, said the long-haired and bearded stuntman was a Muslim convert who had several wives and families. There was no independent confirmation of this police claim.

Villegas was also reported to be a stunt actor for the action series "Asian Treasures" starring Robin Padilla.

Police said they also confiscated another hand grenade inside Villegas' pants. Villegas had earlier told police officials he had brought four grenades into the building.

Lights out

On Tuesday night, Villegas switched off the lights of the two-story building and pulled down the blinds.

Earlier, he was seen through the glass window pacing in the room where he was holding his hostages.

During the entire crisis, Villegas fired at least eight shots into the air, apparently to scare off bystanders.

Former INQUIRER correspondent-photographer Mike Alquinto came wearing a bullet-proof vest and a helmet.

A police source told the INQUIRER that Villegas had punched, kicked and butted Vallestero with a handgun several times on Tuesday night.

His friend Rondon told reporters that "he (Villegas) felt tricked" in the house dispute that resulted in the court case. *Allison W. Lopez*

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From page A1

Cruz of Class 1999 and Tara Velasco of Class 2003.

Her achievement is seen as a fitting tribute to the 108-year-old PMA, the first military academy in Asia, which started accepting women in 1993 through Republic Act No. 7192 (or the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act).

Two other women are among the top 10 of Maragtas' Class—Cadets First Class Gemilyn Mendoza, 23, of Pangasinan, who placed fifth, and Judyline Canoneo, 26, of Cebu, sixth.

Mojica will receive the Presidential Saber and the PGMA Achievement Award for Excellence from President Macapagal-Arroyo, the commencement speaker.

She will receive as well the Philippine Navy Sword and the Jusmag Award.

A total of 148 female cadets, including 23 members of Maragtas Class, have graduated from the PMA.

'Turnback'

Mojica, the youngest of seven children, said she did not expect to be the class valedictorian.

"I never aspired to be No. 1. My goal was to have a college education," she said.

Both Mojica and Canoneo are "turnbacks," a PMA term for cadets who had to repeat a year or two because of academic and other reasons. They originally belonged to Class 2006.

"After that [leave from school], I told myself it would be the last," said Mojica, who is also a champion swimmer and a taekwondo jin.

Mojica was a business administration sophomore at the Cavite State University when she and her brother were told by their parents that they had to stop their studies.

The family needed the money for the medication of their father, a security guard, who had diabetes.

"After that, and as if on cue," Mojica saw on television the then PMA superintendent, Gen. Rufo de Vera, calling for applicants to the academy.

"I did not intend to take the exam but I had no other choice," she said.

'One of the best'

Mendoza said a cousin, a colonel, had inspired her to pursue a military career.

"I thought I would be better here [at the PMA]. But it turned out I became one of the best," she said.

Canoneo said that her mother had single-handedly raised her and her siblings, and that she had vowed since she was in first grade to enter the military to help her.

"I forgot about my vow, but when I was studying to be a teacher at the Cebu Normal University, all my classmates applied to take the PMA exam. I was only a walk-in applicant, but I was the only one among the 12 of us in the *barkada* (gang) to make it," Canoneo said.

She said she would marry her boyfriend after graduation next week.

Cadet First Class Jonelle Beltran of Zamboanga City, the class salutatorian, is one of the PMA's 32 cum laude graduates this year.

He will receive the Vice Presidential Saber, Philippine Air Force Saber, Academic Group Award, Management Award and Jusmag Award.

The others in the top 10 are Cadets First Class Arnold Enriquez of Zamboanga City, third; Emil Leyba of Tublay, Benguet, fourth; Cyrus Angelo Castillo, cum laude, of Muntinlupa City, seventh; James Lowell Andaya, magna cum laude, of Dumaguete City, eighth; Reuben Sancho Zate, cum laude, of Camarines Sur, ninth; and Lemuel Rae Antonio II, cum laude, of Quezon City, tenth

Cadet First Class Androus Rogel Ca... ...atan, the class baron, will receive the PGMA Award for Leadership. He will also graduate cum laude.

THE TOP 10 of the 282 graduating cadets of the Marangal na Tagapagligtas Class pose for a souvenir shot with PMA Superintendent Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig (center). The topnotchers are from left, Lemuel Rae Ancheta (10), Emil Gaspar Leyba (4), Jonelle Diego Beltran (2), Judyline Canoneo (6), Andrelee Mojica (1), Gemilyn Mendoza (5), James Lowell Andaya (8), Cyrus Angelo Castillo (7), Arnold Enriquez (3) and Reuben Sancho Zate (9). EV ESPIRITU/NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

1st in recent history

Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig said the graduation ceremony would be held on a Monday—the first time in recent history—because that was the only time the President would be available.

According to Maligalig, the Maragtas Class is the first batch to graduate fully from the PMA Roadmap Plan, which was implemented in 2002 to combat what he called the "three evils of the PMA"—dishonor, academic mediocrity and bullying or hazing.

Of the 282 members of Maragtas Class, 151 will join the Army; 72, the Navy; and 59, the Air Force.

PMA cadets ...

From page A1

the class.

Last year, the Philippine Military Academy conducted its yearly nationwide recruitment and examinations for applicants who will become members of Class 2010.

Of the 5,004 examinees, only 772 (or about 15.43 percent) passed, and only 267 were admitted as cadets.

Like others before them, they will receive free education.

Why is it that despite being criticized as a flawed institution, the PMA continues to draw young men and women, mostly from poor families, into its fold?

The answer is simple: With the present economic conditions, sending children to private or public schools has become a problem for many parents. And free education is too tempting to pass up.

PMA cadets each receive a monthly stipend of about P15,000.

P514-M annual budget

The PMA receives a total of P514 million a year from the national government and spends P2 million to train each cadet during the four-year program.

Unlike other scholars, who are only given allowances, PMA cadets are considered employed. They get basic pay, hazard pay, clothing allowance, subsistence allowance, yearend bonus and cash gift.

In a study conducted by this reporter in 2003, many cadets said they joined the PMA because of the promise of deliverance from poverty through free college education, a monthly stipend that they could send to their families to help send their siblings to school, and a stable job after graduation.

Immediately after graduation, they are commissioned as regular officers with the rank of second lieutenant and ensign in the Armed Forces.

These officers receive a monthly salary and other benefits in the performance of their duties, whether they are in the Air Force, Army or Navy.

Is it any wonder that many cadets described their entry into the PMA as "a saving grace"?

Low family income

At least a fourth of the respondents said their parents earned between P5,000 and P10,000 a month.

The annual per capita poverty threshold was estimated at P11,906 in 2002—a 2.5-percent increase over the 2000 threshold of P11,620.

Thus, according to the National Statistical Coordination Board, a family of six should have a monthly income of P4,961 to meet its basic needs.

Of the total number of cadets interviewed for the study, 64.5 percent said they decided to join the PMA to get good and free education. Only 51.2 percent said they wanted to be of service to the country.

At least 20 percent of the respondents said their fathers were farmers, fishermen, laborers, clerks, traders, overseas Filipino workers and plant and machine operators; and 16 percent, retired soldiers or enlisted men.

Most of the respondents learned about the PMA through their parents or relatives, some of whom are graduates or retired officers and enlisted personnel.

The second main source of information was the mass media.

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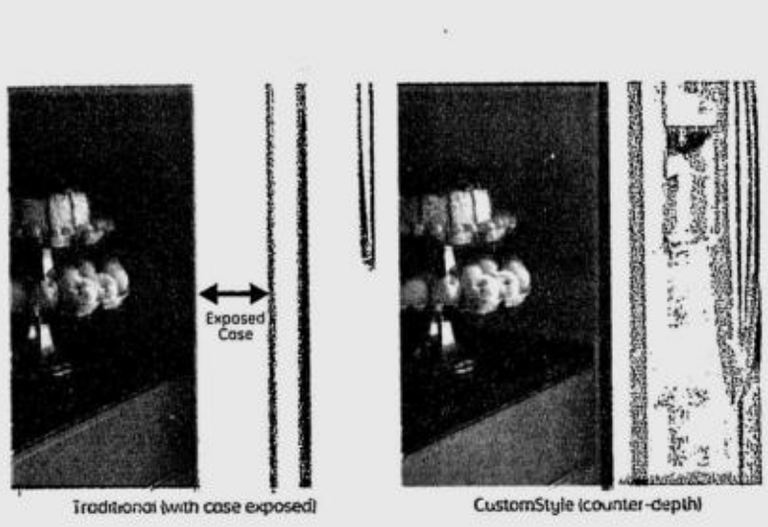

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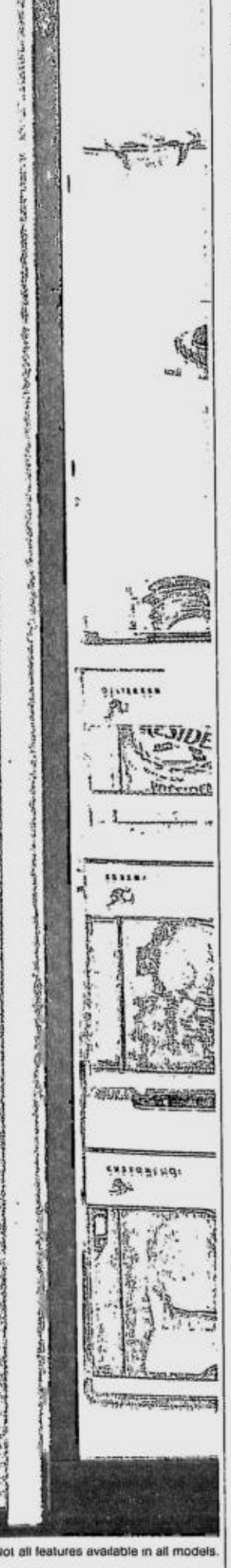

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Up to 20 Magdalo officers to plead guilty for less time

By Christine Avendaño

SOME MILITARY OFFICERS WILL PLEAD guilty over the July 2003 failed coup, also known as the Oakwood mutiny, in exchange for lenient punishment or less jail time.

The officers are among the 59 facing a general court martial for the failed coup, during which some 300 soldiers briefly occupied the Oakwood Premier Hotel and a section of the Ayala commercial center in Makati's financial district, demanding the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Legaspi, president of the general court martial, adjourned the hearing yesterday after defense lawyers made known that 15 or 20 officers wanted to reverse their earlier not-guilty pleas and plead guilty to a lesser offense.

Lead prosecutor Col. Pedro Davila said that 40 other officers were considering the same option "but have not made up their minds yet."

Davila told the court that he had informed "higher authorities" about the plea bargain that defense lawyers presented to prosecutors a month ago and was waiting for final approval.

All 59 are accused in the case of the *People of the Philippines vs Capt. Rupert Reaso*, one of two cases being jointly tried by the general court martial in connection with the 2003 failed coup.

In the Reaso case, the officers are charged with violating five provisions of the Articles of War, which are mutiny, conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, disrespect to the President, and disrespect to superior officers.

The second case, *People of the Philippines vs Capt. Milo Maestrocampo*, involves the core group of the Magdalo junior officers numbering 29. They are charged with conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

This group include the group's leaders Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, who is now running for the Senate, and Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala.

Davila declined to say what concessions were being sought by the 20 military officers in exchange for their guilty pleas.

"Some of the conditions that they mentioned seem to be reasonable. Some are not reasonable," he said.

Lawyer Trixie Angeles, who represents Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, said the defense was proposing to consolidate the charges against their clients and reduce them to a "single charge and single penalty."

Angeles said her guess was that the lawyers were aiming to enter a guilty plea on the lesser charge of conduct unbecoming.

"The penalty will be whatever the time has been served plus a minimum of 10 months, continuous pay until finality of judgment and discharge [from the service]," Angeles told reporters.

Another defense lawyer Edgardo Abaya said his clients were exercising "individual decisions."

"It's your right as an accused individual to change your plea," Abaya said.

Abaya said the soldiers, who have been detained for almost four years, faced a long court process and may have been doing a lot of thinking.

"It's possible they are growing impatient since they also have families," he said.

2 airport cops sacked

By Tarra Quismundo

THREE POLICEMEN HAVE BEEN removed from airport duty after allegedly extorting cash from a Japanese passenger during a routine security check at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 2.

SPO1 Jovy Cabico, PO2 Orlando Tañega and SPO1 Danilo Pangilinan were relieved from security detail at the Naia Centennial Terminal on Tuesday after Japanese Ogata Tomeo told airport police that officers demanded money from him before his Fukuoka-bound flight on March 8.

Tomeo returned to the Philippines on March 11 to lodge a complaint against the two policemen.

Tomeo told investigators that the police officers, assigned at the security checkpoints of Naia Terminal 2's international departure area, at first demanded 1,000 yen upon initial screening.

The passenger ignored them but, he alleged, one female police officer and two policemen inspected his bag and told him that the cash they found inside was restricted from being carried out of the country. He said the two officers took him aside and demanded P35,000 from him.

Victorino; 70

ERLINDA VICTORIno, widow of the late Herminio "Vic" Victorino of the Rotary Club of Manila and UST Philets class 1954 died on Sunday, March 11.

Her remains lie at the family residence at 5386 Hiwaga St., Barangay Olympia, Makati City.

Interment will be on March 18 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

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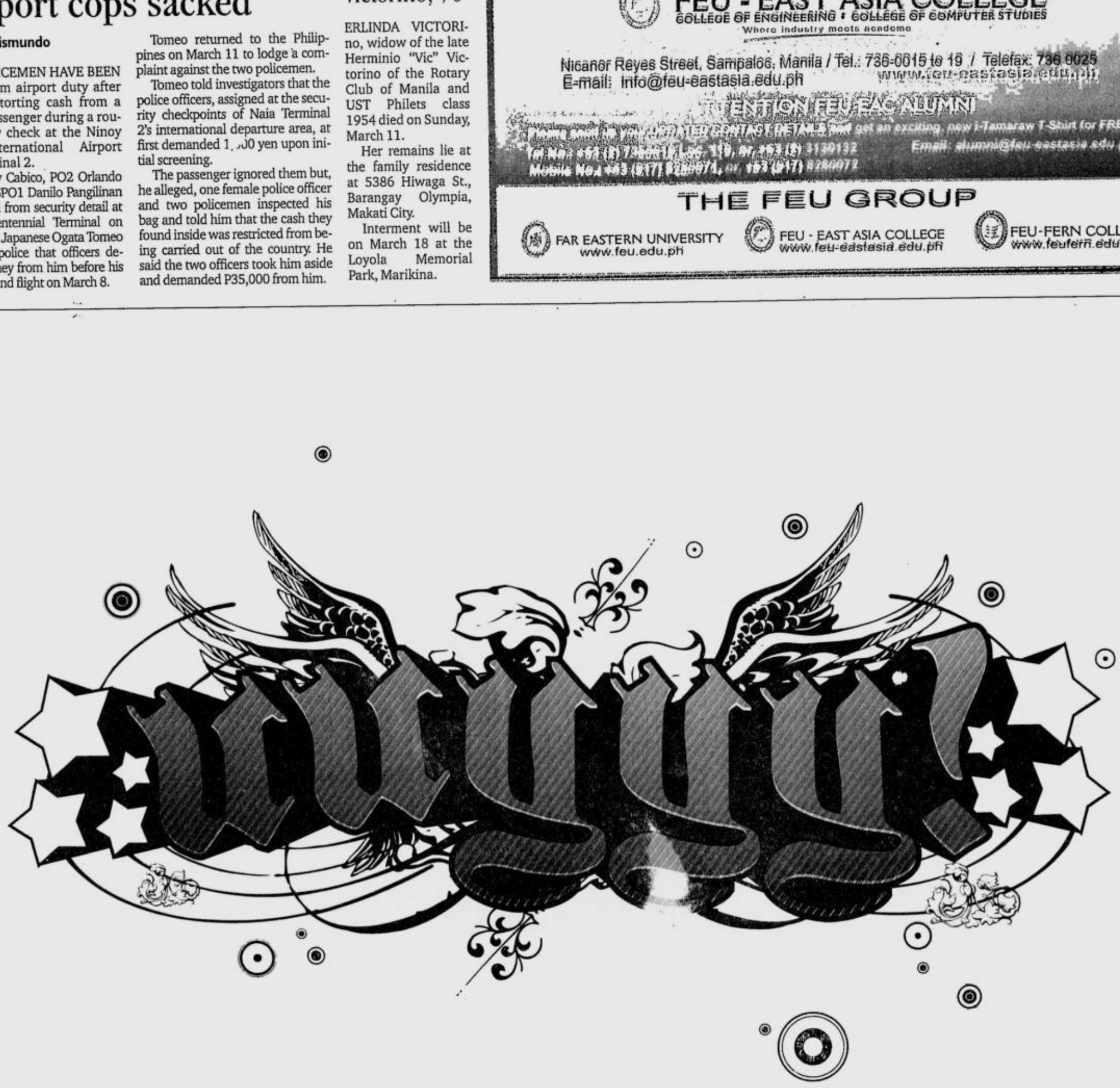

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OPINION

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Limits of the pulpit

THE CURIOUS THING IS THAT MARIANO VElarde, more famously known as Brother Mike, wants to outdo Abraham of the Bible and Diogenes of Ancient Greece. A few days ago, Velarde asked the Catholic bishops of the Philippines to proclaim 18 good men and women worthy of Catholic votes. It may be recalled that Abraham couldn't find 10 in Sodom and Gomorrah; and, as legend has it, Diogenes couldn't find even one honest man in Athens.

EDITORIAL

At first, Abraham asked God to spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (whose reputation he was aware of) if he found 50 righteous people there. Failing so, he asked God to lower the limit, step by step—to 45, then to 40, 30 and 20. In each instance, he failed in his search, until he successfully negotiated to bring the limit down to 10. Counting Lot (his nephew), his wife, at least two married daughters, at least two sons and two unmarried daughters, Abraham could present only eight righteous people. And so God went on to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

Diogenes the cynic is said to have regularly gone around the marketplace in Athens with a torch (or a lamp) in broad daylight, looking for an honest man—he never found one.

And now Velarde wants to outdo both.

Since 1986, when he decided to support the vice presidential candidacy of Arturo Tolentino, Velarde has been a player—and an increasingly important one—in the political scene. The membership of his Catholic charismatic group, El Shaddai, is counted variously at three to seven million; and not being a cleric, Velarde has often openly endorsed national candidates. It is over the question of who his group should endorse that Velarde's appeal to the bishops is based.

The Catholic bishops are correct in resisting Velarde's appeal, which will certainly draw them into the endorsement game. It is one that—objectively speaking, that is, in a purely political sense—is always difficult, particularly for politically unsophisticated prelates, to play. Even the late Jaime Cardinal Sin came to realize he did not possess a command vote; what more a disunited (and cautious to the point of paralysis) group of bishops, such as the Philippine Catholic Church has today.

In contrast, the crucial period of our national formation from 1896 to 1946—when our national leadership was frankly suspicious, even hostile, to the Catholic Church—increasingly saw Catholicism carve out a place for itself in the political life of the nation.

But there were limits. As our political system degenerated, and the moral authority of elected leaders sharply declined, the Catholic and other churches came to play an important, at times prophetic, role in identifying when political life needed to be informed by guidelines concerning faith and morals as applied to governance. The broader these guidelines were, the more acceptable, even crucial, they became.

The disgraceful 1949 elections led to the hierarchy's support for clean elections in 1953, including support for Namfrel, which was revived in the 1980s, which was marked by a collapsing economy and a political system as disreputable as it had once been in 1949. The Church played a role in proclaiming the governments of Marcos and Estrada as devoid of "the mandate of Heaven," indisputably so in 1986 and less successfully so in 2001 and since. Cardinal Sin himself, in the wake of the May 2001 revolt, began the process of retreating from active intervention in politics and a return to a pastoral attitude toward faith and morals—and tried to define how these should interplay with partisan politics.

Therefore, it is perhaps healthier for the nation that bishops focus on the broad policies along which they have a right to guide their flock, and that they resist the temptation to anoint candidates, a partisan activity that can only diminish their moral authority. Espousing a Catholic-centered approach to political participation is properly the role of political parties such as Ang Kapatiran. It is one that Mike Velarde can, and has, played—but on his own responsibility. It isn't a moral obligation, in a sense, that he can, or should, pass on to the bishops. If discernment in all things has become a global Catholic advocacy, then it begins at home, with the distinctions that bishops may have ignored in the past, but are adhering to today: to teach, but not command, when it comes to faith and politics.

Mixed bag

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

LONGER THAN ANYBODY IN EAST ASIA," Filipinos have tried assorted decentralization measures to jump-start sluggish, murky governance, notes a new Asian Development Bank Institute study. The results are a mixed bag.

"A decade and a half on, decentralization in the Philippines has neither been a notable success or a disappointing failure," write Arsenio Balisacan (University of the Philippines), Hall Hill (Australian National University) and Sharon Faye Piza (Asia Pacific Policy Center).

In their summary of "The Dynamics of Regional Development," the three academics agree: "Reform has broadly worked ... Some administrative and political authority has been transferred to regions and some ... activist high-quality local governments (like Quezon City) make a difference."

But it "has not delivered a decisive shift of power and resources out of the center," they add. Neither has it resulted in "vibrant, efficient and responsive local government" nor improved shoddy governance.

Overwhelming benefits of "deconcentration" jelled in just three regions: "the two Manila spillover of southern and central Luzon and the Cebu-centered Visayas." Not one region in the Philippines can be singled out as the most globally connected, although "enclaves"—like Metro Manila and Cebu—are well-wired internationally.

Can policymakers replicate strategies that boosted these enclaves? Regions well-wired into the global economy grow faster. China's coastal regions, Mexico's border with the United States, and Bali in Indonesia document this expansion. Here, the need is still for a clear, predictable and stable regulatory environment.

Central governments everywhere are under pressure to loosen their leash on cash and clout. In China, Russia and Vietnam, the stress ratcheted up as centralized communist economies crumbled and free markets opened. Similar shifts "followed the overthrow of centralized authoritarian systems," as in Suharto's Indonesia. India and Malaysia have well-honed, center-region structures.

Unlike China or Thailand, "no major changes occurred in Philippine economic geography over at least two decades, probably longer," the overview notes. Metro Manila towers over sluggish regions. And life expectancy in Cebu or Pampanga is almost a generation longer than in Sulu or Tawi-Tawi, the Philippine Human Development Report notes.

"The country's most serious regional problem is Mindanao," the study asserts. "The head-count poverty estimate for the two poorest regions, Western Mindanao and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, was more than 10 times that of the national capital .... Between 1986 and 2004, an estimated 91 percent of Philippine provinces were affected by ideology-based armed conflict."

The study further notes: "The Philippines is a high-inequality country compared to most of Asia." About 80 percent of differences in household income stem inequality within regions, like the ARMM, not between regions. This disparity blunts poverty alleviation. "The country's unenviable record on poverty reduction in recent years is due not only to its low per capita GDP growth rates," but also to its "weakness in transforming income growth into poverty reduction."

People vote with their feet and move from poorer to richer regions. About a quarter of the labor force is now abroad. Thus, inter-regional disparities will increase further, stressing the urgency of a broad-based regional development.

Here, "the pendulum swung back and forth between devolution and central authority." Under the Marcos dictatorship, "the power of the center increased significantly. A major decentralization program began, in 1992, with the enactment of the Local Government Code. Efforts in devolution have continued since then."

Preparations for local decentralization were meticulous. The path-blazing taxation retention provision in Sen. Emmanuel Pelaez's "Barrio Charter" of the 1950s had, by 1983, evolved into a full draft that Sen. Aquilino Pimentel shepherded through Congress into the Local Government Code. "But implementation has been mixed." The transfer of 70,000 personnel, from central government to the regions, has not been completed.

The political economy of regions reflects national patterns: (1) revolving doors of the ins and the outs of government; (2) weak politicized *nomenklaturas* or bureaucracies; (3) dynastic control by major families.

Despite their enhanced powers, LGUs remain midgets in development. "Their expenditure amounts to just 3.3 percent of the GDP after decentralization"—puny by other devolved Asian regimes.

"(They've) been unwilling to raise their own revenue, particularly through potentially rich sources such as property tax. The widespread perception is that LGUs are invariably controlled by local elites, unwilling to tax themselves."

Instead, LGUs prefer to panhandle for IRAs (internal revenue allotments) from Malacañang. "Shell cities," unable to raise their incomes, will mushroom from 60 in 1991 to 129, just to cash in on IRAs.

One reason in the lag of regional development, the study says, is that "local government elections have generally not been effective in exacting accountability. (And) political success is only weakly correlated with development achievements." (Read: Do-nothing crooks get re-elected)

"In the regions, citizens perceive more clearly the sources of poor decision-making in public service delivery, and local level accountability is generally on the rise," the study adds. But "transforming institutions, structures, processes and (especially) mindsets is a slow, long-term process."

* * *

E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com

State of the 'neysion'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT'S A BRAVE GAMBLE ON JUN URBANO'S part. Just when movies have become a footnote in Philippine history—we used to produce some 300 per year, and now we're down to a handful—he has dared come out with one at no small cost to himself and friends. Indeed, he hasn't come out with a romance, a sex farce, or a horror-comedy-musical hodgepodge, the presumably time-tested way to recover precious investment, he has dared come out with a thought-provoking satire.

I can only most ardently wish his gamble pays off, if only to prove to local movie producers there's still a market out there, albeit one that demands new and more creative stuff. These days, in particular, with Iranian Asian movies barging into the Oscars, or indeed when I see giant strides being made by China (and Taiwan), Iran (whose movies prove you don't need huge stars and a huge budget to make movies, you just need a huge intelligence and a huge imagination) and even Thailand (the one country that used to send students to the Philippines to learn as much as they could from it), I weep for Philippine movies. Not too long ago, we were poised to conquer the world in that respect.

Well, not too long ago, we were poised to conquer the world in many respects. Which is the sort of elegy Urbano's movie itself sings, even as it masquerades as comedy.

That movie is "Ang M.O.N.A.Y. ni Mr. Shooli (Misteyks Opda Neysion Adres Yata)," which features the redoubtable character Urbano popularized on local TV many years ago with "Mongolian Barbecue." Its premise is clever: Mr Shooli, who is now living a rustic, if somewhat backward, life in Mongolia, gets a letter from the Philippines saying Professor Garci is dying. Garci—not the fellow you have in mind, Shooli warns the audience—was the kindhearted soul who raised him in the Philippines after his parents died in an accident while on a visit. Shooli resolves to see Garci off, the prospect of coming back to the Philippines after a long time filling him with much pleasure. He recalls rhapsodically that the Philippines was a veritable pearl of the orient, rich, lush, full of grand vistas and an even grander people. A country that, when he left it, was, well, poised to conquer the world. How vastly modern it must be by now, he imagines.

He takes the next plane home, and gets a rude awakening. The gap between expectation and reality proves as wide as the distance between the Philippines and Mongolia itself. Shooli gets into all sorts of scrapes, refuting all his recollections about a beautiful land and a beautiful people. In the end, he gets to be taken for a terrorist and an NPA rebel combined. He is presented to the media by the authorities, his face much the worse for wear and beating, and there he delivers a speech—hence the title of the movie. Whatever happened to the Filipino? How could a people so full of talent and generosity have become so full of selfishness and ill-will?

Nothing like the point of view of a Borat-like "outsider" to drive home the point about our national tragedy. Or to look with new eyes at our national foibles, which have caused it. The humor ranges from ragged to grand, from humdrum to inspired, from paralytic to sublime. The movie relies in great part on gags, but the whole isn't just one series of verbal and visual gags stitched together on a storyline fluffier than corner-store *pan de sal*. Give or take a wayward turn that Urbano couldn't resist, the movie comes off as one cohesive piece of work, as near to a comedic tour de force as we've seen since the days of "Sic O'Clock News." A sampling of the mayhem that transpires there:

Kuhol, Shooli's sidekick, raises his arms when a cop approaches them. The cop says angrily, "I'm a cop, not a hold-upper." Kuhol asks, "There's a difference?" When Shooli and Kuhol drop by City Hall, a woman is napping on her desk. When they wake her up, she gets angry. But it's office hours, Shooli protests. Precisely, the woman snaps back, it's the official time for napping. Later, they encounter zombies along the corridor. Those are the 15-30 employees, explains an official. Shooli asks Congressman Manik-Manaog (Leo Martinez), who recalls they once had a basketball team composed of Juan Flavier, Ogie Alcasid, himself et al. "Who was your muse?" Manik-Manaog replies, "*Yung nakatira dyan, yung me nunal* (the one who lives there, the one with the mole on the face)."

Some of Shooli's asides are killers. He sees a couple of boys brawling and he breaks them up. "Why are you fighting?" he asks. And adds muttering, "You're just like politicians."

Urbano gets no small help from a whole slew of veteran actors who have lent their abundant talents out of sheer goodwill. You'll find the list in the ads. They are uniformly hilarious, but Martinez stands out in the role of the character he too popularized on TV many years ago. With elections down the corner, his character will probably contribute more to voter education than all the ads and forums put together.

Above all, M.O.N.A.Y. delights while leaving its audience with much to think about. It never forgets it is a movie, and a comedy at that; not a political tract written in pamphlet form at that. It's just what the doctor ordered for the special patient called Juan de la Cruz, a sugar-coated pill for someone who doesn't even know he is sick and dying. In its own wacky way, it partakes liberally of the best of this country's satiric tradition, the kind one Jose Rizal excelled in.

Like the best of satire, M.O.N.A.Y. is funny, M.O.N.A.Y. is serious. M.O.N.A.Y. is comic, M.O.N.A.Y. is tragic. M.O.N.A.Y. is coarse, M.O.N.A.Y. is urbane.

Go see it. Between paying for your ticket and paying your taxes, easy to see where your money is better spent.

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Battling corruption

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

MALACAÑANG SOUGHT TO COUNTER THE findings of a recent survey conducted by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC). PERC's poll, which had as respondents some 1,476 expatriate businessmen in the Asian region, ranked the Philippines as the most corrupt economy among 13 countries and territories in Asia, its corruption grade deteriorating from 7.8 last year to 9.40. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo presented data from other survey groups, such as the SWS, showing a significant decline in corruption cases across key cities between years 2000 and 2005, especially those involving extortion activities in government offices. They also acknowledged that existing red tape encouraged extortion, but they stressed that the government has sought to deal with red tape through the formation, a few months ago, of the "Anti-Red Tape Task Force." They also cited testimonials from foreign chambers operating here on the decline in corruption as well as the dismissal of erring presidential appointees.

* * *

Much of corruption is committed by petty bureaucrats, owing largely to low salaries. Countries like Singapore have tried to solve this through a combination of higher salaries and stiff penalties, making it very painful to lose one's job. Another cause of corruption is the politicians who seek to raise campaign funds through extortion or in collusion with corrupt businessmen.

If only the steps in securing business licenses or franchises, or the payment of income and customs taxes, etc. could be streamlined, we would see a dramatic decline in graft and corruption.

Another cause is our media institution which is among the freest in the world and which always highlights and sensationalizes corruption cases such as those raised in endless congressional hearings. Compare this situation to countries where the media are tightly controlled, such as China, Vietnam and Singapore. There, corruption cases end up buried deep inside newspapers or merely whispered about.

* * *

Corruption hounds most governments. In recent months sensational cases have hit China, Japan and Korea. In fact, a media report noted that with French President Jacques Chirac's recent announcement that he would not seek a third term, he would lose the presidential immunity that had allowed him to keep corruption investigations at bay. It noted that Chirac's group has been implicated in party financing and other corruption scandals dating back to his stint as Paris mayor in 1977 to 1995.

There is no question that the Arroyo administration has to show more political will against corruption. At times, one gets the perception that it plays blind to this socio-political malaise to accommodate certain supporters. And officials who seek to play it straight are sadly booted out of office.

* * *

Al Cusi has obviously lost so much hair over the past several years that he has been Naia's general manager. One reason is that every so often he finds himself having to announce the postponement of Naia 3's opening due to many structural defects. It should be pointed out, however, that a lot of those defects appear to be directly linked to the corruption that attended Naia 3's construction during the Estrada administration, when certain onerous provisions in the contract were inserted. Naia 3's case is no different from the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant of the Marcos regime, which was constructed in a shoddy manner.

* * *

The Philippines has established its reputation as the "epicenter of international pool" after it recently won approval from the World Pool Association (WPA) to host the 10-Ball Open in September 2008, a relatively new event last played in Korea. Not only that, in November this year and next year, RP will again successively host the WPC 9-Ball Championship that was held here in November 2006. Ronnie Alcano, the Filipino reigning champ in both the 8-Ball and the 9-Ball tournaments, is preparing for these three big events.

In this connection, Billiards Digest, the world-renowned magazine for this sport, has recognized Yen Makabenta, chair of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines, who succeeded in cornering these big events for RP, as its "Man of the Year." It also paid tribute to the Philippine crowd that watched last year's championship games at the PICC, terming it the "Classiest Crowd of the Year," for its impressive show of support for Alcano's rival, the German Ralf Souquet, during the award ceremonies. Said the magazine: "The Filipino crowd ... began chanting 'Souquet! Souquet!' and applauding until he lifted his head and waved. It was a genuine exchange of respect and gratitude that no one will soon forget." Wish we could display "classy" behavior, too, in politics.

* * *

The distinguished "Ten Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service (TOWNS), has recently launched its search for 2007 awardees. Nominations from government, the academe, business and civil society are welcome. Filipino women from ages 21-45 who have excelled in their chosen fields of endeavor and contributed to the nation through their expertise are qualified, provided they are no more than 45 years old on July 31, 2007. Founded in 1974 by the late Gov. Manuel Aliño of the Lions Club International, TOWNS has had 12 searches that have recognized 128 outstanding Filipino women. Individuals, clubs and organizations may submit their nominations to the TOWNS secretariat (Tel. 833-1125 or 831-5196) and to the Museo Pambata Foundation Inc. Nomination forms may be downloaded at www.towns.org.ph. Personally, I want to see as winners less of the high-profile Metro Manila women, but more of those from the provinces who have been very low key but have rendered truly outstanding service to the nation.

MDGs, FTAs

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

ALPHABET SOUP, ANYONE? THE LETTERS ARE swimming in my head like letters in a bowl of alphabet soup heaving with dollops of jargon. One moment I know what a bunch of letters means, the next moment I find myself asking what SIA is. I bet, you also do not know. SIA stands for "sustainability impact assessment." Do FTA and EPA mean the same? Are we ever an MFN? What happened to the WTO?

And then there are the kilometric words. Trade liberalization, globalization, neo-liberalism, multilateral, bilateral, developmental, etc. Journalists hate long words. Why say less-fortunate when you simply mean the poor? But I will concede to the economists' "below poverty line" although I can only picture a line, not the face of destitution, hunger or penury.

These thoughts were swirling in my head while attending two recent seminars meant to help journalists understand what is going on in this world, this country in particular.

The first one was on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) seminar, which was exclusively for journalists and sponsored by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). For this one, the only way to get journalists to stay put was to fly them to some island. And so we were happily marooned in the island of Panglao in Bohol with the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) and SocialWatch (an activist NGO), to help with the A to Z of the MDGs. How to critically analyze the progress reports? How/where to find MDG-related stories?

The second meeting was of civil society organizations (CSOs) and academics who have been constantly monitoring, studying and objecting to the proposed free trade agreement between the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (EU-Asean FTA). I had been with them at the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) in Helsinki where a "Pandora's Box" of FTA and neo-liberalism ills was opened for all to dissect and vivisect.

A little primer here. The UN's MDGs have been around since the 1990s and your barangay captain should know them by heart. With 2015 as target year, all the 189 UN member-states have pledged to: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality by two-thirds; (5) improve maternal health by three-quarters [of] the maternal mortality ratio; (6) combat and reverse the incidence and spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; (8) develop a global partnership for development.

Goals 1 to 7, we were told, were most urgent and must be dealt with on the ground. Goal 8 is kind of iffy, less difficult to track and quantify, something best addressed by governments of developed countries. But on second look, Goal 8 has a lot to do with Goals 1 to 7. In our pocket MDG primer, it is in fact the one with the longest explanation.

Part of it says: "Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory ... address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports, enhanced debt-relief for heavily indebted poor countries, cancellation of official bilateral debt ... provide access to affordable essential drugs ... make available the benefits of new technologies ..."

Here the EU-Asean FTA could be put in context. The two meetings that I attended now meet. The goals of one and the issues of the other must now converge. CSOs from Asean and Europe are concerned about the proposed EU-Asean FTA that would be concluded within the next two years. The CSOs are demanding an SIA (remember?) before negotiations.

They cite the EU-Mexico agreement that resulted in Mexico's doubling trade deficit. And contrary to the predicted benefits to labor, the agreement resulted in rising unemployment, temporary employment contracts, below-standard wages and absence of social security. While foreign investments have increased, this has resulted mainly in foreign takeovers of domestic industries, without generating additional employment or increases in wages.

The EU now appears to be pushing ahead with similar FTAs in other regions regardless of the consequences, the CSOs warn. The EU, they add, seems to be promoting anti-development policies with its push to incorporate the controversial issues already rejected at the Word Trade Organization (WTO) by Asean members.

Other issues that Philippine negotiators, legislators and executive officials should be aware of:

- the liberalization of services at a WTO-plus level, given the dominance of EU service companies, will tend to out-compete Asean service providers;
- limitations for national governments to regulate in the public interest will jeopardize access to essential services, and have far-reaching implications for the poor;
- EU requirements that Asean substantially lower its tariffs will result in a significant loss of revenue for developing countries which cannot easily raise similar funds from other taxation sources;
- the EU's high priority on access to raw materials will seriously undermine Asean's sovereignty over their natural resources, including restrictions on exports, investment and intellectual property rights;
- the EU will push for market access commitments with regard to government procurement;
- intellectual property protection is already reducing access to affordable medicine and education in developing countries.

After the alphabet soup with dollops of jargon, I need to go out there and find/give the issues a human face.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Caught in the middle

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

ON JULY 7, 2005, I WROTE IN THIS SPACE THAT "the Center must hold." At a time when the President's woes were escalating, I myself had gone from the Ramosian "waning, waning" attitude toward her government to one of hostility. And yet I don't think I was alone, at the time, worrying over the possibility that the situation could end up with the middle finding (and agonizing over) two things more offensive, and threatening, than the question of the President's legitimacy. Those two things were the Left and the Estrada loyalists.

At the time I felt, and still do, that it was one of those make-or-break situations when a society had to decide to gamble on embracing change, or make the fatal (in the long run) choice of insisting on the status quo. Change, to my mind, would begin with the consequences of our demanding accountability from the President: starting with the political and social risk involved in an impeachment, or investigation, or resignation.

Not embracing change, meaning, letting her stay or following whatever rabbits she released down their respective holes, but which would always come back to the President who released them, would mean that the only options for change would be the ones represented by the Maoists, Estrada apologists or believers in a junta.

I had no way of knowing at the time, of course, just how swiftly the release of the rabbits would come. On July 8, the President responded with her own proposal to salvage what was still a deteriorating political situation: "What I intend to do is to work with legislators and civil groups who believe that changes in the fundamental law of the land are necessary in order to confront such basic issues as federalism, the character of our legislative process, reducing red tape in government processes, running for public office under a true party system and with less need to raise campaign funds, modernizing the economic provisions of our Constitution, and so forth."

None of which has come to pass. Not least because, as even some of her own supporters say, it was never in the President's or her allies interest to accomplish any of these things between 2005 and the present and, perhaps, even until 2010. The latest proof? A party system that requires less campaign funds is stillborn as the President's own propagandists preach the advantage of their party machine—oiled by patronage and government logistics.

Soon after my July 7 column, on July 11, 2005 to be exact, Luis Teodoro countered my view—that the Center must hold—by arguing that the Center didn't even exist. He wrote at the time: "[T]he Center ... does not exist in a country where the divisions are so stark they are primarily between those who have everything and those who have nothing. Elements of the so-called political Center ... would like the rest of the country to believe that they are the alternative to the Left and Right, when actually they comprise a category of the Right, but too embarrassed to admit its conservatism."

In my blog, I offered the following reflection on his response to my column: "The past few days suggest to me that Teodoro is essentially on the right track; the Center may already be abroad, and those that I'd hoped would constitute a centrist force here have, indeed, proven themselves to be more reflective of the ones that have put the country where it is. This sad state of affairs is worth pondering deeply in the coming days." Days stretched into years; and while I still dispute Teodoro's belief that there is no Center—there is one, but it is small, and its puny nature underscored by its own divisions—I cannot dispute his argument that the instincts of our Center, including the more enlightened members of the upper class and our middle class, have, more often than not, been rightist.

But how to define Right, Center and Left? Of the three, the Left defines itself best, not least because the Right prefers not to debate but to enforce its will at the point of a gun, and the Center's ability to define itself—and not be defined by others—has been decimated by the passing on of so many of its leading lights. And what's more, definitions depend on an ability to refer to widely understood concepts which our collapsing educational system no longer teaches.

If, by chance, someone quotes Benito Mussolini and his fascist dicta (as Right as rightist thinking can get) to you: "Everything in the state. Nothing outside the state. Nothing against the state." Does it matter if you don't know who Mussolini was, what fascism is, and the seductive but utterly condemnable meaning of such a belief?

Umberto Eco, by way of American essayist Lewis Lapham, digested fascist thought into a set of axioms (see http://organicconsumers.org/Politics/harpers101205.cfm)

1. The truth is revealed once and only once.
2. Parliamentary democracy is by definition rotten because it doesn't represent the voice of the people, which is that of the sublime leader.
3. Doctrine outpoints reason, and science is always suspect.
4. Critical thought is the province of degenerate intellectuals, who betray the culture and subvert traditional values.
5. The national identity is provided by the nation's enemies.
6. Argument is tantamount to treason.
7. Perpetually at war, the state must govern with the instruments of fear. Citizens do not act; they play the supporting role of 'the people' in the grand opera that is the state.

And ask yourself this: how many of these attitudes are put forward, every day, by the Palace? And how many do you agree with? And if you agree with them, why is it that a supposedly democratic government puts them forward, while the Estrada loyalists and the Left resist them? And doesn't this show that the latter may understand democracy better than our government?

Price of freedom

YOUNG BLOOD

Alquanna

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

BACK WHEN I WAS A KID, THERE WAS A WOODEN GRID attached to one of the walls in our house. It was a shelf for knickknacks, and it became a mini-apartment complex for me and my cousins' little toys complete with matchbox houses and soft-drink crown tables. My aunt thought it was ugly, and so it was removed when the house was repaired. But it remained whole as it lay outside in the yard for a few weeks.

When I moved into my room, the wooden grid was returned. You see, my room used to have something like an open balcony, from where I could sit on the built-in desk and look over the whole sala without being noticed. I used to pretend that it was an open tower or the peak of a mountain and I would see everything that was happening—everything from what was on TV to the guests who came calling.

Mom had the grid reattached to keep me from falling in case I sleepwalked. Now it is decorated again with all sorts of knickknacks, from small stuffed toys to little slips about the future I kept after eating all those fortune cookies.

Little did I understand what Mom meant then, and it's only now that I realize that protection is sometimes synonymous with imprisonment. Mom can be very protective. She can't trust me to go out into the so-called big bad world where nothing is sacred anymore.

When I was in Grade 1, everyone else went on a camping trip except me. Mom told me it was OK and that I wouldn't miss anything. We went on a trip to a small resort in Laguna instead, and she assured me I could go with my classmates when I was a little older (being the youngest in the class obviously didn't help). So when everyone went back to class and talked about this huge bug that crept into their tent or this thing that they did, I would just smile, keep silent and pretend I saw that bug or had fun with them, too. But they didn't seem to care what my mother and I did while they were on that camping trip.

After missing all the camping trips during my elementary school years, I guess I got used to it. Thank heavens, I got to go on the field trips somehow, or I would have turned into an introvert. Almost all of my trips were with my mom and relatives, though.

In high school, I got to hang out with friends at the mall and wherever, but seeking Mom's permission entailed such a long process, starting with questions about who would bring me there and who would fetch me, that it wasn't fun anymore. Mom only allowed me to go by myself if she could fetch me at 3 p.m.

Sleepovers? I was allowed to go only once, and it took two weeks of pleading before she let me. Compare that to my batch mates who could bunk in at their friends' houses at short notice.

During our last year in high school, I was invited to join a very short (nine days) exchange student program to Indonesia. It was during the first PTA meeting of the quarter, when my adviser told Mom about the invitation, and she couldn't say no. But as we were leaving after the meeting, she was mumbling about how hard it would be to manage the trip.

I went, and came back, and my partner went and returned. But I was back in my prison. I was not allowed to attend our annual Lenten retreat. I was one of only four students in our whole batch who didn't go, but while the others cited financial and religious reasons, mine was security. But how dangerous could a trip to Tagaytay be? Mom mentioned monetary reasons, but everyone knew that was not the case.

During my first semester in college, I applied for membership in an organization. I had to drop out soon after because all the meetings were held late at night. One time I took a jeepney on my way home and we got held up. But when I arrived home at midnight, smelling of second-hand cigarette smoke, I decided it was over. Even though the members of the org were really great people, I felt that I didn't fit in. Besides I had had enough of the sermons about those late nights, too.

These days when I have to go here or there, I need to prepare my reasons for such a long time that it becomes such a bother and I usually give up the whole idea. Mom keeps citing my age as her reason for refusing to let me go.

So what if I'm just 16? I can't see how a simple trip to an event would be so complicated and dangerous.

But that's where I have always been: behind a grid, just looking down. I now understood why I loved watching: because I could never take part without having to break the grid that held me back, and with that grid all those frills would fall off, too. I am an diot who doesn't dare to break out of my cell.

My only window to the world is the LCD screen, and even then Mom complains that I am in front of my PC the whole day. But she doesn't get it: Here I am free to go where I want to go, and age doesn't restrict me. I am free to create my own identity and not one that is governed by her or society. And the worst thing that could happen is that our Internet bill would skyrocket or a really bad virus disguised as a game would infect my computer.

A few steps away from the grid is a window which opens out to the roof. But after venturing out on the roof, the only options left for me would be to jump down to the pavement, or go on to our neighbor's roof. Either way, there's a risk of getting injured. If I jump, I'll surely break a foot. If I move to our neighbor's rusty roof, it might crumble into dust. But thinking about it, I may be free of my mother when I do go through. It seems that the risk of getting injured is the price of freedom.

When I decide to leave, either by breaking the grid and rappelling down or going through the window, I will let you know somehow.

Alquanna, 16, is a BA European Languages freshman at UP Diliman.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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Rampant violation of election law

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6646 (THE Electoral Reforms Law of 1987) introduces additional reforms into our electoral system.

Let me cite pertinent provisions of this law that have been flagrantly violated during elections, even as the campaign period for the May 2007 elections was starting.

"Sec. 10. Common Poster Areas. The commission shall designate common poster areas in strategic public places such as markets, barangay centers and the like wherein candidates can post, display, or exhibit election propaganda to announce or further their candidacy.

"Sec. 11. Prohibited Forms of Election Propaganda. In addition to the forms of election propaganda prohibited under Section 85 of Batas Pambansa Blg., 881, it shall be unlawful:

(a) to draw, paint, inscribe, write, post, display or publicly exhibit any election propaganda in any place, whether private or public, except in common poster areas and/or billboards provided in the immediately preceding section, at the candidate's own residence, or at the campaign headquarters of the candidate or political party: Provided that such posters or election propaganda shall in no case exceed two (2) feet by three (3) feet in area: Provided further, that at the site of and on the occasion of a public meeting or rally, streamers not more than two (2) and not exceeding three (3) feet by eight (8) feet each may be displayed five (5) days before the date of the meeting or rally, and shall be removed within twenty-four (24) hours after said meeting or rally."

The MMDA has made some efforts to remove propaganda materials posted in violation of the law, but it can hardly cope with the frequency and number of violations. And those arrested for the violations, when questioned on who gave them the instructions to paste the posters, refused to name names. The Comelec and the authorities should hold the candidates whose names appear in the propaganda materials liable for violation of the election law. This is the only way the law can be upheld.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said that the penalty could be the disqualification of the guilty candidate. The chair should make true his words so the public and the candidates will have reason to believe him.

—APOLONIO G. RAMOS,
42 Mindanao St.,
Filipinas Village, Marikina City

LETTERS

Expensive Pichay

SENATORIAL ASPIRANT PROSpero Pichay, who has been a congressman for three terms, should have introduced a bill in Congress to strengthen our agriculture sector, and provide vegetable farmers with subsidy. Instead, he kept silent, at the least, about the importation of vegetables from China.

Nowadays, *pechay* and other vegetables are expensive and hardly affordable to the masses. A very small bundle of *pechay* here in Zamboanga City costs P5.

"Planting a Pichay in the Senate" will not alleviate poverty. After spending P16 million per week for all sorts of campaign tricks, Pichay will be more expensive after the elections—if he wins.

—TONY ITURRALDE,
a_iturralde2004@yahoo.com

Meralco not charging meter deposit

THIS IS IN REPLY TO THE LETTER sent by Teodoro Miguel Jr. titled "ERC tolerating unlawful charges vs consumers?" (INQUIRER, 3/12/07)

We would like to clarify that the Distribution Services and Open Access Rules (DSOAR) has not repealed the Magna Carta for Residential Customers, which was promulgated by the Energy Regulatory Commission on June 9, 2004.

As stated in Article III, Sec. 3.4.3 of the DSOAR, "The customer who is subject to disconnection/termination and who requests continuation of service shall be required to first pay any unpaid billed amounts. The customer's bill deposit shall be re-imposed and/or adjusted in accordance with his average monthly bill for the preceding year."

Miguel's service was disconnected on March 27, 2006 and was subsequently terminated on April 6, 2006. His service was promptly reconnected upon settlement of his unpaid bill with the understanding that he would settle the required service/bill deposit within 30 days. To date, the service/bill deposit remains unpaid.

Miguel also said in his letter "'At any rate, we would like to be clarified why you are still imposing a meter deposit,' the ERC asked Meralco." With regard to this, we would like to clarify that our company, pursuant to existing law, is no longer imposing the meter deposit. The term "meter deposit" found in an earlier letter from Meralco to the ERC should have been "bill deposit." The interchange of terms, rest assured, was an honest mistake. Subsequently, we sent a letter to the ERC on Dec. 13, 2006 to clarify the matter. To reiterate, we no longer are imposing the meter deposit.

We hope we have clarified the issues Miguel raised. We are looking forward to serving him and addressing his concerns.

—ELPI O. CUNA JR.,
vice president and head,
Corporate Communication,
Meralco, Pasig City

To feast on others' misfortunes

NESTOR TORRE, AS A COLUMnist, serves as a good guide in evaluating Pinoy pop culture. I commend his recent article, "None of our business" and agree with him that "Gossip may seem to be fun, superficial and salaciously delicious, but it can also be a crime, because our legal system correctly believes that one of our basic rights is our right to privacy." (INQUIRER, 3/10/07)

May I thank him for reminding us that even public figures have this basic human right to privacy. "The only thing stars owe their public is their best performance. Constantly. All the time. Period."

What I cannot take is the crab mentality that regular Filipinos and many members of the entertainment industry have, such that they readily feast on the misfortunes of other people.

Perhaps, this may seem like an insignificant detail but it is part of the attitude that hinders us, as a people and as individuals, from achieving true progress.

—FRANCES PAOLA G. DOPLON,
69 H. Reyes and Dela Rosa Sts.,
BF Executive Triangle,
Parañaque City

PCSO relying on slow computers?

THIS IS IN REPLY TO MANUEL Morato's letter titled "Announcement of winners right after lotto draw is not doable." (INQUIRER, 12/7/06)

Two things have to be considered. One, the transmission of data from the PCSO terminals around the country to its central computer system. Two, the retrieval of the data from the system's database.

The transmission of data (related to the bets) takes no more than an hour; that's why betting stops at 8 p.m., an hour before the 9 p.m. draw shown on TV. And remember, many bets are placed days, even two weeks, before the actual draw. Moreover, the PCSO must have a sophisticated and superfast Intranet.

The retrieval of data should be the tricky part but it really is not. I understand some 40 percent of the betting proceeds are plowed into the prizes. Since the average daily increment to the megalotto pot is P5 million, it is reasonable to assume that some 12.5 million bets are placed for each megalotto draw. When the first number is drawn, say 25, a superfast computer will take no more than a few minutes to determine how many combinations have that number and, thus, still in the running. After the six numbers have been drawn, it will take that computer even a shorter time to determine if there is a winner or none at all.

Morato claims that "the time is consumed only in the printout of bets placed nationwide." Why, in heaven's name, should this be done? Unbelievable!

He claims "it's not only the jackpot winner that the system unloads but all the thousands and thousands of winning combinations for the second, third and fourth prizes. That takes time to download." The jackpot is the heart of the draw, why should the other combinations be given the same priority as the winning jackpot combination? And how can there be thousands and thousands of other winning combinations?

If Morato refers to human intervention from the outside, he is correct: the PCSO computer system cannot be manipulated. But what if the intervention, the cheating, is done by insiders printing out a fresh ticket containing the winning combination? Who would know any better?

Obviously, Morato knows very little about computers. The PCSO should have its computer experts come forward to give the public a technically sound explanation.

I challenge the PCSO to give control of the computer system—from the start of the draw to the declaration of the winning combinations—to computer experts representing NGOs and the betting public. The PCSO makes a big show of the weighing of the balls, etc. but the more insidious cheating can take place behind the scenes, at the computer room.

Ponder this point: Before, jackpot prizes would reach more than a hundred million pesos, and the increments to the pots were higher—which meant that the number of bettors was higher. Now, the main prizes rarely reach P50 million, and the pot increments P5 million. Yet the prizes are won (perhaps, harvested?) on a regular basis.

At the very least, the PCSO must be transparent.

—RENE TORRES,
rentorres@yahoo.com

Right step but may just be cosmetic

THE DESIGNATION OF 99 RTC branches as special tribunals to try and resolve extrajudicial killings (INQUIRER, 3/5/07) is a step in the right direction. However, unless the perpetrators are first identified and brought to the halls of justice, these special tribunals will have nobody to try.

The case of lumad leader Nicanor delos Santos of the province of Rizal is a classic example. Delos Santos was fatally shot in the back on Dec. 8, 2001, allegedly by Cpl. Alberto Rafon of the Philippine Army, whose unit was securing the visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo in Antipolo City during that time. The military claimed that Delos Santos was an NPA, out to disrupt GMA's visit. But witnesses said he was unarmed and waiting for a ride when he was killed.

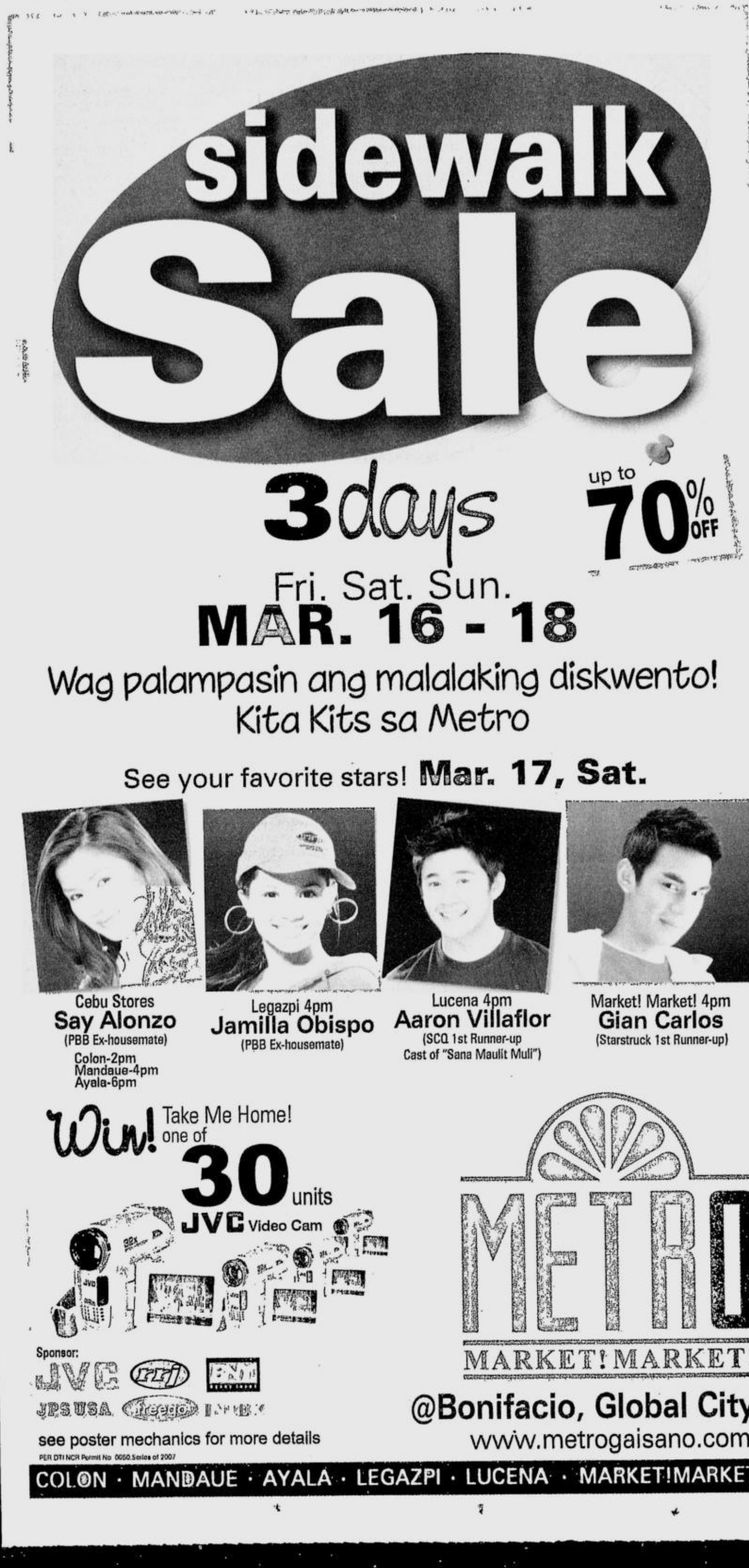
The Office of the Prosecutor of Antipolo City rejected the military's version of the incident and indicted Rafon for homicide. But, alas, Rafon could no longer be found. The RTC-Antipolo was thus forced to archive the case pending his arrest.

Recently, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon claimed that Rafon was discharged from service in October 2002. (INQUIRER, 1/31/07)

But a warrant for his arrest had already been issued as early as August 2002. The military could have easily detained him to face the charge for Delos Santos' death instead of discharging and letting him go scot-free to hide from criminal prosecution.

Setting up special tribunals to try the perpetrators of extrajudicial killings is indeed laudable; but unless the Arroyo administration shows enough seriousness in haling the perpetrators to court, there will always remain the perception that everything this government is doing is cosmetic.

—REMIGIO D. SALADERO JR.,
counsel for the
Delos Santos Family,
119 Circumferential Road,
Antipolo City



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PROTESTERS display placards during a picket at the gates of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City to protest the spate of killings of leftist activists in the country.
JOAN BONDOC

Member of Bayan Muna is murder victim No. 838

DAVAO CITY—A MASKED MAN fatally shot yet another leftist in Pigcawayan, North Cotabato, just a day after a Bayan Muna member was killed in Misamis Oriental.

The toll is now 838 murdered leftists, according to the human rights group Karapatan.

Bayan Muna-Southern Mindanao reported on Wednesday that its member, Carlito Getrosa, 49, was outside his house in Purok Narra in Barangay Midpapan 2 in Pigcawayan when he was shot in the head at around 8 p.m. on Sunday.

The assailant, who wore long sleeves and a bonnet, fled on a motorcycle.

Bayan Muna said that as early as March 8, villagers had noticed an unidentified motorcycle-riding man in the area.

Quoting one of its local volunteers, Bayan Muna said the unidentified man usually arrives in the afternoon.

Gate crasher

"On March 11, the victim, together with friends and relatives, were having a usual small gathering and conversation at the back portion of the victim's house while enjoying *tuba* (coconut wine)," Bayan Muna said.

Getrosa excused himself by 8 p.m. to take dinner.

It was when the assailant, who witnesses said had been in the area since 7:30 p.m., arrived and shot Getrosa.

"The assailant wearing dark long sleeves and a bonnet suddenly appeared and shot the victim in the head using a .45 cal. pistol with silencer. The victim died on the spot," Bayan Muna reported.

Karapatan in Southern Mindanao has condemned Getrosa's murder and blamed it on the government.

"We, the family and relatives believed that this execution is a result of a total crackdown launched by the Arroyo administration, through its iron hand, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its agents to quell legitimate dissents," the group said.

Irritability

The group said the military could now be likened to a loose cannon ball after United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston blamed it for the killings.

"Pointing to the military as the perpetrators of the unresolved political killings irritated them," it said.

He said that the military was doing its best "to save its dying credibility" by accusing communists for the murders.

"The Arroyo administration is greatly desperate to stay in power using its machinery to topple her critics. Karapatan believed that as long Ms Arroyo remains in power, the issues of political killings, forced disappearance and other human rights violations will never be resolved," Karapatan said.

Gabriela branded the Arroyo administration as "the most fascist of governments as it is the only government which can murder a witness to another murder."

Gabriela cited the death of Siche Bustamante-Gandinao, who stood witness to the murder of her father-in-law during Alston's visit.

Bustamante-Gandinao told Alston that military agents had killed her father-in-law, farmer-activist Dalmacio Gandinao. *Jeffrey Tupas, Eldie Aguirre and Grace Albasin, Inquirer Mindanao*

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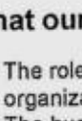
What our participants/clients say:



"In my work as an HR professional I have seen the myriad challenges that this profession had to confront over time in order to uphold its value in organizations. One of the more crucial challenges is for HR to become a true partner of business. Especially in an environment that now treats human resource as Human Capital, this is nowhere more apparent than in designing compensation systems that will address both short and long term goals. In this regard, I have found Noel de Leon a true resource on strategic compensation management. He qualifies well as a guru on this subject."
Orly C. Alparce Jr., HR Director - Boehringer Ingelheim (Phils.) Inc.

"This course has helped my team see the bigger value of HR to the organization. There is a direct connection between compensation & benefits, OD, staffing, and employee relations to the business -- HR has a principal role in growing revenues and managing costs. Noel has excited many to carry this perspective His approach is both people-empowering and business-practical."
Noli Tibayan, HR Director - Roche Philippines, Inc.

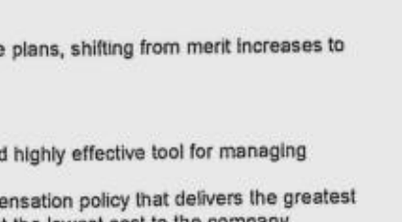
"I attended the 3Ps Compensation Management Workshop as a refresher and update and sharing on new practices with other companies. This program has given me a broader perspective on compensation and alignment to our organization's own philosophies in rewarding people."
Pierre Monseratto, HR Director - Diageo Phils. Inc.

About the Facilitator: Noel A. De Leon, Ph.D. - Managing Director
Mercer Human Resource Consulting Philippines

Noel A. de Leon, Ph.D is the Managing Director of Mercer Human Resource Consulting in the Philippines. He is responsible for the overall growth and profitability of the Philippine office. He has more than twenty five years of experience in Human Resources Management and Information Technology. He holds a BS degree in Engineering, a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) and a Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.) in Organizational Development.

In the consulting arena, he developed an expertise in the strategic management of the human resource. He has designed and implemented the compensation, incentive plan, competency and performance management programs of many multinational and local organizations across industries and across the Region.

Noel A. de Leon is the Chairman of the Association of Appreciative Inquiry of the Philippines and Vice President of the Compensation Management Society of the Philippines. He is also the author of numerous published articles. He regularly facilitates public seminars and been invited as guest / resource person to lecture on various topics by the mass media, professional groups, the academe and the business groups. When time permits, he teaches in the graduate school of business (MBA) on a part-time basis.



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Baguio breast cancer patients call for support group creation

BAGUIO CITY—Maria Victoria Bugasto, 48, a breast cancer survivor, longs for the creation of a support group to help cancer survivors spread awareness on the disease.

"We have been silent about cancer in Baguio, little did people know that we can help each other and that [cancer] can be treated. Cancer is not a death sentence," said Bugasto, Northern Luzon coordinator of Information on Breast Cancer and Other Services (Icanserve), in a forum last week.

Bugasto, citing statistics from the Philippine Cancer Society, said the Philippines tops countries in Southeast Asia in the number of breast cancer cases. The PCS said cases were rising by an average of 5 percent annually.

It said breast cancer was the leading cause of death among Filipino women and the second most prevalent type of cancer in the country, next only to cancer of the lungs.

Bugasto said every Filipina had a 10 percent risk of getting breast cancer. Some 6,360 breast cancer patients die each year while 25 percent of the women were diagnosed with the disease in 2005, she said.

Diet and lifestyle could be among the possible factors that lead to cancer, she said.

"Filipinos love to eat too much, drink and smoke," she said.

Dr. Jasmin Igama, president of the Philippine Society of Medical Oncologists (PSMO), said no study has been conducted yet to explain the cause of breast cancer.

Igama said one could have cancer due to environment, exposure to radiation and genetics.

"While we do not have studies to prove the cause of breast cancer, it is more of a risk factor," she said.

Maria Theresa Pantaleon, president of the Ventures Club, a group of women professionals in Baguio helping cancer patients, said the statistics should be alarming enough to draw attention.

"Like HIV-AIDS, breast cancer should be given importance when it comes to education and information because it comes without you knowing it," Pantaleon said.

"The cure for breast cancer may not be discovered here and now and [cases] may continue to rise. But what can we do about breast cancer besides treating it and keeping people from getting it? Through concerted effort in developing high impact information campaigns that focus on breast cancer education, prevention, early detection, screening and treatment," Bugasto said.

She said cancer was a very personal battle and although treatments and protocols might vary, its impact in the life of every woman would be the same.

"The fear of considering death or dying, the grim possibility of leaving loved ones behind, a false sense of losing ones femininity, the distress of where and how to source funds for treatments, the physical pain of the vicious onslaught of surgery, numerous chemotherapy cycles and radiation sessions, the loss of self and self esteem ... I could go on and on," she said.

She said support groups for breast cancer patients had already been established in Cebu and Metro Manila. These groups have their own halfway houses to accommodate patients stricken with cancer.

Bugasto said her group wanted to spread the word that cancer is a social issue. She lamented that cancer has always been marginalized in health programs on preventive diseases. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Social welfare execs keep off teenage rebel captured after clash

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—Provincial social welfare officials refused to take into custody a 17-year-old New People's Army rebel captured by a team of soldiers and policemen after an encounter on Monday.

Priscilla Navar, provincial social welfare development officer, said her office would not take the teenager into custody because her office could not guarantee her security.

Insurgency, or rebellion, is not among the crimes cited in Republic Act No. 9344, which provides protection for children caught in conflict with the law, she said.

The identity of the suspected teenage rebel was withheld to protect her.

Senior Supt. Saadra Gani, police provincial director, said the rebel was captured in an encounter in a hinterland barangay of San Andres town, about 30 kilomters from the capital town of Virac.

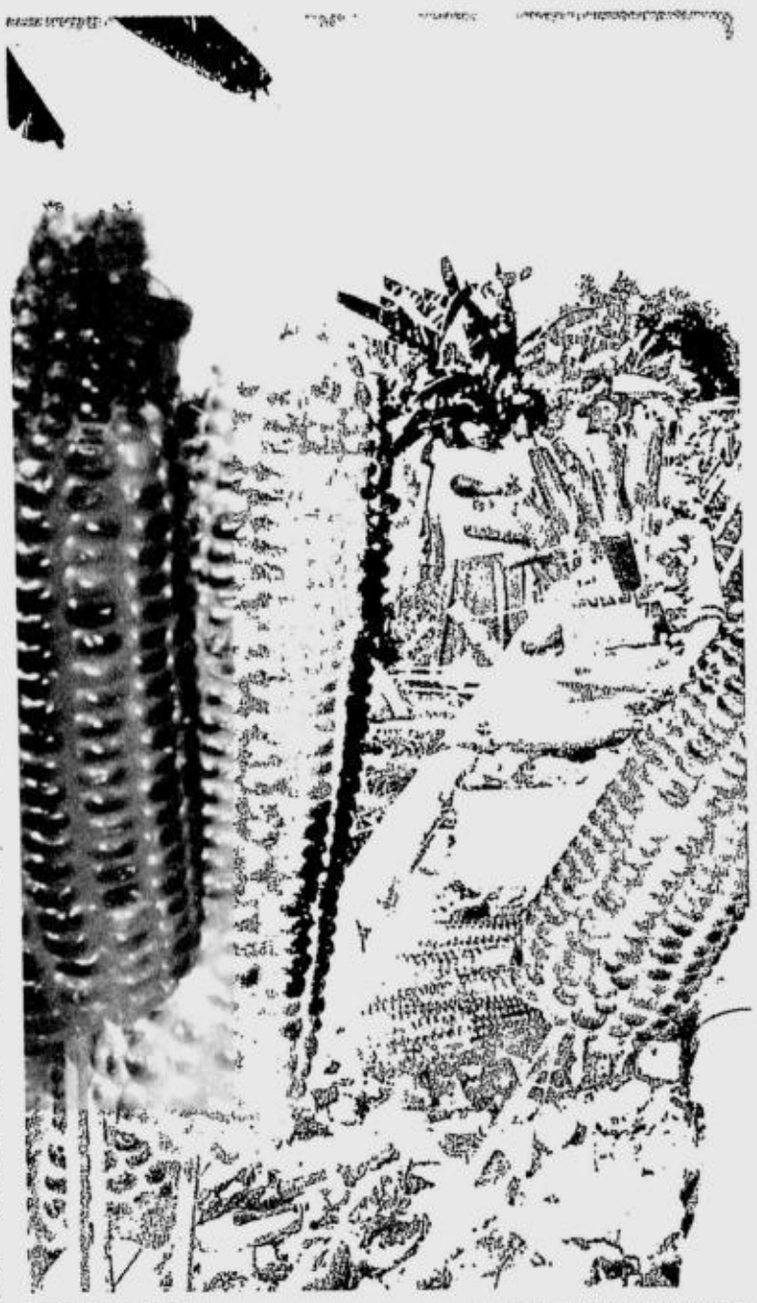
Gani said the female rebel was captured after a clash with eight NPA rebels who had encamped in a mountainous area.

He said the military and police team was composed of members of the Alpha Company, 65th Infantry Battalion led by 2Lt. Vince Cajegas, and the Provincial Police Mobile Group (PPMG) headed by Insp. Rogerio Pacheco.

Navar said last year, a 16-year-old rebel was turned over to them by the Viga police.

She said social workers tried to contact the boy's family in Caramoran town but could not locate them.

The boy has since been staying with the Viga police for security reasons, she added. *Fernan Gianan, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



TOP GRAINS JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Corn is still the best, according to organizers of a corn festival in South Cotabato, a corn-producing province in Mindanao.

Mayor's claim cops used by pols baseless–PNP

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE chief Director General Oscar Calderon denied an allegation of Mayor Jessie Castillo, of Bacoor, Cavite, that the PNP was being used by a high ranking politician for partisan politics.

"The mayor's claim is purely speculative and baseless," Calderon said in a statement in reaction to full page ads placed by Castillo.

"The PNP is a professional organization and it is unfair for anyone to claim control of the PNP"

Calderon dared Castillo to name the policemen who were used by Cavite politicians for partisan politics and show proof of his allegations.

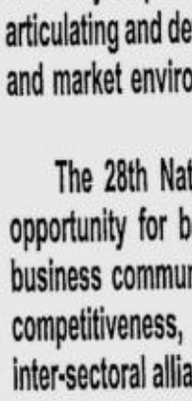
Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr., PNP spokesperson, added that Castillo's allegation that the PNP was involved in manipulating the results of the 2001 elections in favor of administration candidates was misleading.

"How can he make that claim when he won in Bacoor in 2001 against then administration bet Lani Mercado," he said. "I was the provincial director of Cavite then and we never allowed the PNP to be used in partisan politics."

Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas, Cavite police chief, said the police would submit evidence on the abuse of authority case filed against Castillo.

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) has been pushing for significant reforms in employment and socio-economic development of the country. Recent developments at the wage front have only emphasized the urgent need for the organization to lead in articulating and defining the advocacies that would impact on the policy and market enviroments inhibiting the generation of wealth and jobs.

The 28th National Conference of Employers presents a golden opportunity for both employers and the members of the labor and business communities to explore the expanding horizons of national competitiveness, global employment, public-private partnership and inter-sectoral alliances to forge a formidable agenda of positive change for and beyond the employers sector.



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Entrepreneurship and Employment

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Topic 2: Moving the Informal Sector to Mainstream Business

Plenary Session 3:
Learning from Competitiveness Models that Work

Topic 1: We're in this Together: Employee-Employer Partnership
Topic 2: Giving Back to Society: Business-Community Partnership
Topic 3: The Bond that Ties: Small Enterprise-Big Enterprise Partnership

Panel Discussion
"Pushing Labor Market Reforms through Win-Win Legislations"

21 March 2007, Wednesday *Day 2*

- *Presentation of Agenda on Competitiveness and Productivity*
- *Closing Ceremonies*
- *Announcement of KAPATID Awards 2007 Winners*
- *Presidential Address*

For inquiries and registration, please contact the NCE XXVIII Project Team at 8956803; 8905517; 8906512 or e-mail : nce28_ecop@yahoo.com.ph

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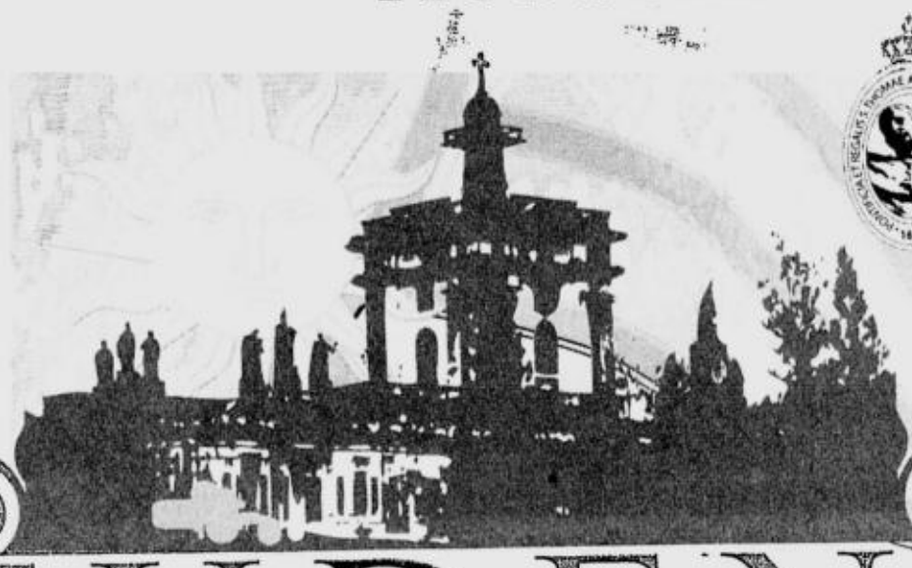

STUDENT A·W·A·R·D·S

2007

March 15, 2007, 9:00 a.m., Education Auditorium

RECTOR'S ACADEMIC AWARD

Sem. Ricardo F. Luanzon, MMHC	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Sem. Shelwin G. Fernandez	Faculty of Philosophy
Herschel F. Magracia	Faculty of Civil Law
Allan Louie E. Cruz	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Randy M. Dabu	Faculty of Pharmacy
Tracy Ann P. Llanera	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Joyce Ann Y. Tan	Faculty of Engineering
Kristine T. Castro	College of Education
Maria Lyzandra H. Fernan	College of Science
Marie Veronique D. Boncan	College of Architecture
Sheryll Anne S. Go	College of Commerce and Business Administration
Heliodoro B. Fiel II	Conservatory of Music
Hilarious E. de Jesus	College of Nursing
Reil Vinard S. Espino	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Katrina Ann C. Tan	College of Fine Arts and Design
Rosylyn L. Ramirez	AMV College of Accountancy
Josephine Fatima V. Calanog	Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Geno Mari B. Medina	UST High School
Frances Bernadette P. Alviz	Education High School
Jaya Krissette A. de Ala	Elementary School

POPE LEO XIII COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AWARD

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY	
Sem. Renier T. Supranes	Faculty of Sacred Theology
GROUP CATEGORY	
The Theological Society	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Medical Missions, Inc. - Student Group	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Red Cross Youth Council - Pharmacy Unit	Faculty of Pharmacy
Philippine Association of Nutrition - Omega Chapter (PAN)	College of Education
Psychology Society	College of Science
The Scarlet - Commerce Unit	College of Commerce and Business Administration
MMI, Nursing Group	College of Nursing
Physical Therapy (PT) Society	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Becarios de Santo Tomas Scholars Association	Office for Student Affairs

QUEZON LEADERSHIP AWARD

Sem. Enrico Julian N. Paglinawan	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Rina B. Reburiano	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Paolo F. San Gabriel	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Leonardo F. Sanchez Jr.	College of Education
Charisse Jermaine U. Ong	College of Architecture
Pedro C. Pamittan Jr.	College of Commerce and Business Administration
Marylew C. Marcos	College of Nursing
Augusto Ray R. Manalo	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Christopher Paul C. David	College of Fine Arts and Design
Jayner S. Cruz	AMV College of Accountancy
Marie Soleil P. Tropicales	Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Angeline I. Bernardo	UST High School
Benjamin Jarrod T. Reodica	Office for Student Affairs

BENAVIDES OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY	
Alma Cecilia M. Cabasal	College of Education
Kevin Francis U. Ang	College of Science
Joseph John B. Carpiso	College of Science
David Joseph G. Alzate	College of Science
Antonio M. Totto Jr.	Graduate School
Raymond M. de Leon	Conservatory of Music
Heliodoro B. Fiel II	Conservatory of Music
Hilarious E. de Jesus	College of Nursing
Dane R. Pio de Roda	UST High School
Jose Renato S. Unso	UST High School
Jan Aaron P. Corpuz	Elementary School
Junrey O. Bano	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Benigno B. Marayag	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Bernardita A. Mag-aso	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Jennifer V. Angeles	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Shercila B. Cua	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Liane Marice G. Marquez	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Aimeeh Louie T. Lim	Department of Military Science and Tactics
GROUP CATEGORY	
Inter Nos Editorial Staff	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Kristine T. Castro, Alvin Ringgo C. Reyes & Jenina Kimberly C. Mercado	College of Education
Psychology Quiz Team	College of Science
College of Architecture Basketball Team	College of Architecture
Arnold Cedric P. Aquino, John Ericson T. Sañez, Tzu-Lung L. Pan & Lean Angelo A. Silverio	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Adver Singko	College of Fine Arts and Design
JPIA Debate Team	AMV College of Accountancy
UST High School Taekwondo Team	UST High School
UST Grade School Choir	Elementary School
Men's Basketball Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Women's Basketball Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Men's Judo Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Men's Lawn Tennis Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Lawn Tennis Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Chess Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Table Tennis Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Swimming Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Taekwondo Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Men's Taekwondo Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Salinggawi Dance Troupe	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Tiger Dragons Rowing Team	Office for Student Affairs
UST ROTC Unit	Department of Military Science and Tactics

ST. DOMINIC DE GUZMAN AWARD

The Theological Society	Faculty of Sacred Theology
UST Law Review	Faculty of Civil Law
Medicine Student Council	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Pharmacy Student Council	Faculty of Pharmacy
Legal Management Society	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Philippine Association of Food Technology (PAFT) Epsilon Chapter	College of Education
College of Science Student Council	College of Science
United Architects of the Philippines-UST Chapter	College of Architecture
The Junior Chamber of Business Administrators (JCBA)	College of Commerce and Business Administration
Nursing Student Council	College of Nursing
CRS Student Council 06-07	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
IDi (Interior Design Innovators)	College of Fine Arts and Design
AMV College of Accountancy Student Council	AMV College of Accountancy
Hotel and Restaurant Management Society	Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management
UST High School Pep and Dance Squad	UST High School
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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

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The caves of Bathala

THE PYTHON Cave is explored by World Wide Fund for Nature media officer Gregg Yan. GERALD GENE QUERUBIN

By Gerald Gene R. Querubin
Sta. Cruz, Marinduque

A POPULAR PLACE OF RELIGIOUS cults, the prehistoric Bathala Caves occupy 19 hectares of land, 700 meters above sea level, in Barangay Ipil, about 10 kilometers from Sta. Cruz town proper in Marinduque.

It is a system of predominantly eight caves named Church, Secret, Python, Cemetery, Lihim, Underground, River and Kay Mendez. Other caves have yet to be explored and named.

The biggest, "Kuweba ng Simbahan" (Cave of the Church), was used as a worshipping area and could have been the dwelling area of the early inhabitants of the island-province. It is believed to be the house of Amang Bathala, the Supreme God of the Tagalogs.

Its main cavern is well ventilated and big enough to accommodate 100 people.

"Edible shells abound on the floor near the cave's entrances that could have formed part of the meals of the dwellers," said Cyren Rico, a former science instructor at the Marinduque State College and environmentalist.

A hundred meters from the Church is a burial site, known as the Cemetery Cave.

According to a research paper of H. Otley Beyer titled "Outline Review of Philippine Archaeology by Islands and Provinces," among the artifacts found in the caves were earthen jars, good pieces of china jars and coffin fragments and human relics, including 13 skulls that were all collected and brought to Paris by archaeologist Alfred Marche.

Rock formations

Cults believe that signs of wonderful things to come have been engraved in the cave by Nature. At the main entrance, they say, are the leaning faces of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Violeta Pagtakhan, a cult leader who has stayed in the cave for over a decade, explained that Amang Bathala placed His engraved face in that position to remind everyone that He always watches over His children.

On the ceiling of the main hall is a figure of what appears to be a dove, its wings spread on flight. This, the cults say, is the Holy Spirit.

At the right wing is an image of what they claim is a crying Mary. Below the tip of the tail is a big stalagmite called the Altar. Facing the entire figure is a silhouette of what the cult members see as the Virgin Mary and Christ the King.

On the cave floor is a stone formation of what looks like a man lying down. It is Christ in the Sepulcher, the cultists say. Other images include the "Crucifixion" and a deformed face of an apparent Moriones mask that some say belongs to the suffering Christ.

Near the "crying Mary" is a bell-shaped stalactite that is said to ring every midnight of Good Friday.

A big boulder at the rear of the cave looks like a boat that, cult members say, is the Ark of Noah.

Refuge

The Bathala was a refuge of the Pulahanes, who stayed to pay homage to their Supreme God and to regain the potency of their amulets.

A fanatical group in Leyte founded by Faustino Ablen, an illiterate peasant who assumed the title of Pope, over a century ago, the Pulajan Movement believed that their amulets could protect them from the bullets of their declared enemies—the American colonizers and their Filipinos allies.

In the early 1900s, hundreds of members of the Samahang Tatlong Persona Solo Dios, which was founded by Agapito Illustrisimo, stayed in the cave for quite a long time.

The group was formed in Mount Banahaw in Quezon and still maintains a center there. It believes that Banahaw and Bathala Cave are "spiritually connected."

The Python Cave has only one entrance that is guarded by at least 11 pythons. More snakes are found on its second floor.

Although pythons are believed to be dangerous and aggressive, those at the cave have never harmed visitors. In fact, they could be photographed as close as one foot away. According to local beliefs, the pythons are pets of Bathala.

Enchanted pythons

"This is my first time to see the pythons in the wild and it's great to get near them. This is a different experience that visitors will enjoy," said World Wide Fund for Nature media officer Gregg Yan.

Mount Everest climber Romeo Garduce, who visited the cave system on Dec. 10 last year at the height of Typhoon "Seniang," said it was worth exploring. "It has a lot to offer visitors. The highlight of my visit is to see the pythons that abound in the cave."

Danilo Querijero, provincial environment and natural resources officer, cited Bathala as one of the best among those caves he has visited in the country.

"It is rich in biodiversity and I am happy that the locals were responsible enough not to harm the animals inside the cave," he said. According to him, it is proof that man and the wild can coexist and live in harmony.

In his research paper titled "An Inquiry on the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Bathala Cave," Rico noted stories that the Bathala cave system emerged from the depths of the ocean.

He suggested further studies on it, which holds many other "beautiful" stories, in order to boost cultural conservation initiatives.

THE MARINDUQUE Youth Volunteers Corps, a conservation group, is organizing a cultural tour and pilgrimage on April 2-8 when the province will celebrate the Moriones Festival during the Holy Week. For inquiries, contact (0919) 248-3769 or e-mail myvc@yahoo.com.

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More than a heart-shaped province in heart of country

By Gerald Gene R. Querubin
Boac, Marinduque

MARINDUQUE RESIDENTS are dismayed by reports that many Filipinos don't know where the province is although it was proclaimed separate from Tayabas (now Quezon province) 87 years ago.

Legislative Act No. 2880 declared the split official on Feb. 23, 1920.

Many people still think that the province is situated in the Visayas or in Mindanao, laments Wilmer Imperio II, a social science instructor at the Marinduque State College.

"It is so disheartening to come across those who even think that the Moriones Festival is held in Mindoro and not in our province," he adds.

Imperio notes that some people learned about the province only during the Marcopper mine spill tragedy in 1996 or after the devastation late last year from Supertyphoons "Milenyo" and "Reming."

Ricardo "Dindo" Asuncion, author of the coffee-table book "Marinduque: The Heart of the Philippines," believes that Marinduque deserves a niche on "the altar of the stars." He is a researcher of the Tourism Task Force of the provincial government that published the 235-page book in 2004.

Asuncion intimated that by a providential twist of nature, Marinduque was laid out at the bosom of the Philippine archipelago, right smack in its geographical heart.

He describes the province as serene, intricate and afloat amid sheltered waters within a secluded quarter ringed and protected by neighboring provinces in Southern Tagalog.

And as if in return for all the kind attention and pampering, the island's land mass willed and shaped itself into a heart.

Place, people

The 960-square-kilometer province is located about 100 nautical miles south of Manila and is bounded by Quezon on the north, the Bondoc Peninsula on the east, Romblon on the south, and Oriental Mindoro on the west.

It is composed of six municipalities: Boac, the capital town; Sta. Cruz, the largest town in area and population; Torrijos; Mogpog; Gasan and Buenavista.

Asuncion believes that the Marinduqueños' warmth and hospitality seem to reach the heart and soul of anyone.

Visitors who set foot on the island get the sensation that they are being treated, not as visitors, but as one of the islanders' own.

Marinduqueños, according to Asuncion, will go one step further. They will give visitors a cause to feel they are kings and queens through a local practice known as the "*putong*." The ritual of songs and dances is the people's way of showing warmth and hospitality.

Peaceful, clean

Marinduque has been rated consistently as the most peaceful province in Southern Tagalog and second only to Batanes, countrywide.

Its isolation, small size and matching population density, together with the peace-loving traits of its inhabitants, contribute to the enviable record.

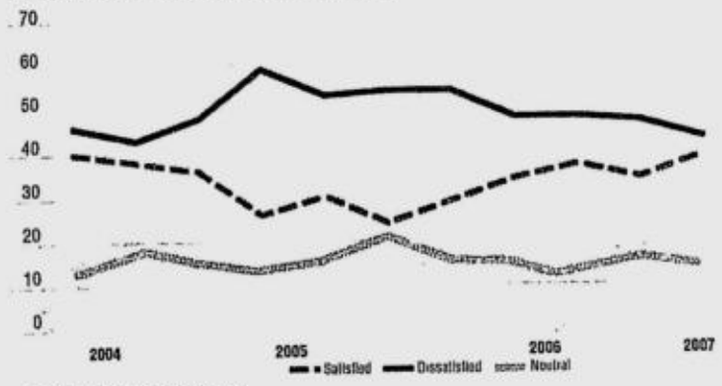
Despite the negative impact brought about by the Marcopper mine spill tragedy in 1996, Marinduque became a Hall of Fame Awardee in 2001 for having won the annual Clean and Green Best Performer Province in the Southern Tagalog for three consecutive years since 1999.

In 2002 and 2003, Marinduque again got the Best Performer Award extending the record to five years in a row.

The annual award is given by the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

SWS: GMA rating improves but still negative

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo satisfaction rating Oct 2004- Feb 2007



SOURCE: SOCIAL WEATHER STATIONS
COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, INQUIRER RESEARCH

From page A1

by Social Weather Stations found.

This is Ms Arroyo's best score since October 2004, when her two-and-a-half year series of negative net ratings began at -6, SWS said in a statement.

The President's net score of -4 in the SWS survey for the first quarter is a "slight improvement" from her -13 rating (34 percent satisfied, 47 percent dissatisfied) in November last year.

The net satisfaction rating is the difference between the percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied.

The survey was conducted on Feb. 24-27 using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the balance of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The results were part of SWS' regular quarterly survey and were not commissioned, the polling group said.

Unpopularity due to reforms

Ms Arroyo told reporters on Tuesday her unpopularity was due to her pushing economic reform programs, including a drive to increase government revenues through an expanded value-added tax.

The President was all smiles yesterday after the SWS survey showed her satisfaction rating had slightly improved.

"Well, all I can say is that if you do what is right and you do your best, God will take care of the rest," Ms Arroyo said during her roundtable forum.

She reiterated that she had to make tough decisions to steer the economy at the cost of her popularity.

Worth it

Ms Arroyo pointed out that among the fruits of her policies were the provision of more social services to the poor such as Philhealth insurance and the lowering of the cost of water and other utilities. One of her guests at yesterday's roundtable had her water bill reduced by P500, she said.

"I think all the sacrifices we made, which made me very unpopular, were well worth it," she said.

The country congressional elections are scheduled for May 14. Although the presidency is not being contested, Ms Arroyo faces the prospect of an opposition-dominated Senate.

Impeachment motion

She is likely to retain control of the House of Representatives, although if the opposition gets one-third of the seats, it will be able to force an impeachment motion against her.

Analysts, however, say it is unlikely the divided opposition would get a one-third presence in the House.

Ms Arroyo is not permitted to stand in the next presidential election due in 2010.

Rating in Metro drops

With (53 percent) of the respondents in Metro Manila saying they were dissatisfied with the President's performance and 28 percent saying they were satisfied, Ms Arroyo's net approval rating in the metropolis dropped to -24 last month from -16 last November.

However, it turned from negative to positive among members of classes ABC, from -14 in November to +7 (44 percent satisfied, 37 percent dissatisfied) in the latest survey.

The President's net approval rating also improved to "neutral" from negative in Luzon outside Metro Manila (from -16 to -2).

Her net rating in the Visayas rose from -7 to +1. It improved from -12 to 0 in Mindanao.

Luzon, Mindanao

In Luzon outside Metro Manila, 40 percent said they were satisfied with the President, while 42 percent said they were dissatisfied; in the Visayas, 41 percent were satisfied and 40 percent, dissatisfied.

In Mindanao, some 42 percent said they were satisfied while 41 percent said they were not.

Ms Arroyo's net approval rating in urban areas also improved from -21 to -8 in the latest survey, with 37 percent saying they were satisfied with the President and 45 percent saying they were dissatisfied with her.

It likewise slightly improved from -3 to +1 in rural areas. *Reports from Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research, and Juliet Labog-Javellana; AP and Reuters*

Loren tops poll; Roco zooms up

From page A1

senatorial winners."

They were in the 12th to 18th places, according to results of a national survey on Filipinos' senatorial preferences that Pulse Asia released yesterday.

The survey was conducted from Feb. 28 to March 5 using face-to-face interviews with a multistage probability sample of 1,800 adults aged 18 and above in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

It had a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points at the 95-percent confidence level.

The survey was not commissioned by any party, Pulse Asia said in a statement.

Biggest gainers

Roco, widow of former Sen. Raul Roco, gained 14.9 percentage points—up from the 7.5 percent of voters who said they would vote for her during the survey on Jan. 25-29.

She rose from between 27th and 44th places to between 12th and 18th places.

Defensor, who ranked between 15th and 26th places in January, gained 7 percentage points. Magsaysay was not included in the previous survey.

Roco belongs to the Genuine Opposition (GO) ticket, while Magsaysay and Defensor belong to the administration's Team Unity (TU) slate.

56.8% for Loren

"Opposition candidate Loren Legarda continued to lead the 80 senatorial aspirants on the Pulse Asia list, with more than half (56.8 percent) of voting-age Filipinos rooting for her.

"In far second and third were GO reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson (41.1 percent) and reelectionist Sen. Francis Pangilinan (39.4 percent), who is running as an independent candidate.

They were followed by Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero (35.5 percent), reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto (35.2 percent) and Senate President Manny Villar Jr. (35 percent). Escudero and Villar are with GO, while Recto is on the Team Unity (TU) slate.

Fourth to 10th places

With possible ranks of 4th to 10th were reelectionist Sen. Joker Arroyo (TU, 34.5 percent), Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III (GO, 34.2 percent) and reelectionist Sen. Edgardo Angara (TU, 32.1 percent). Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano ranked between 5th and 11th (GO, 30.9 percent).

Former Senators Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan (Independent, 27.3 percent) and Vicente "Tito" Sotto III (TU, 25.4 percent) ranked between 10th and 12th, and 11th and 17th, respectively.

Also with a statistical chance of winning a Senate seat were GO candidates Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III (23.1 percent) and former Sen. John Osmeña (21.9 percent), who both ranked between 12th and 18th.

LEGARDA: No. 1

ROCO: No. 12-18

MAGSAYSAY: No. 12-18

DEFENSOR: No. 12-18

During the survey, about two months before the May elections, registered voters were choosing 7 out of a maximum of 12 names as their senatorial candidates, Pulse Asia said.

Twelve seats are up for grabs in the 24-member Senate.

Other gainers

Other gainers in the survey included Escudero, who earned an additional 12.3 percentage points (from 23.2 percent in January to 35.5 percent in March) to rise from between 6th and 14th places to 3rd and 9th places, and Aquino, who gained 11.7 percentage points (from 22.5 percent to 34.2 percent), to rise from between 6th and 15th places to between 4th and 10 places.

Legarda gained 10.2 percentage points (from 46.6 percent to 56.8 percent), to retain her No. 1 rank; Recto gained 9.2 percentage points (from 26 percent to 35.2 percent) to rise from rank 5-14 to 3-10; Arroyo gained 8.7 percentage points (from 25.8 percent to 34.5 percent) to rise from rank 5-14 to 4-10.

Villar gained 8.6 percentage points (from 26.4 percent to 35 percent), to rise from rank 5-14 to 3-10; and Angara, who gained 8.1 percentage points (from 24 percent to 32.1 percent) to rise from rank 5-14 to 4-10.

Losing ground

Cayetano's base of support declined slightly by 0.8 percentage point (from 31.7 percent to 30.9 percent). As a result, his rank dropped from 2-5 to 5-11.

Sotto was also losing ground (3.4 percentage points). Those who said they would vote for him declined from 28.8 percent to 25.4 percent, causing his rank to drop from 4-11 to 11-17.

Honasan gained 4 percentage points (from 23.3 percent to 27.3 percent), but his rank dropped from 6-14 to 10-12.

Zubiri and Pichay

Among the big gainers who did not make it to the list of "probable winners" were administration candidates Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay.

Zubiri gained 8.9 percentage points (from 10.3 percent to 19.2 percent) to rise from rank 20-37 to 13-18, Pichay gained 8.1 percentage points (from 5.6 percent to 13.7 percent) to rise from rank 34-51 to 19-22.

Pichay spent some P33 million for television ads during the first two weeks of the campaign, according to a study by Nielsen Media Research, to earn him the name, "Mr. Big Spender."

Villar and Recto, who spent over P30 million and P22 million, respectively, during the period also posted gains in the latest Pulse Asia survey. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

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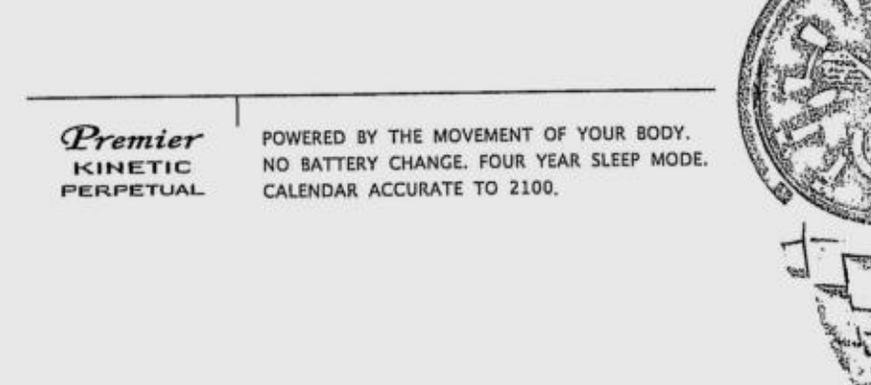

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Jacobs, Paner lead PBA Hall of Fame bets

By Musong R. Castillo

RON JACOBS, THE FORMER LOYOLA AT Marymount mentor who revolutionized coaching in the Philippine Basketball Association, and Manny Paner, one of the PBA's shortest centers ever, were nominated along with 12 others to the league's Hall of Fame.

Jacobs engineered the first-ever sweep in a best-of-seven title series in the PBA, guiding amateur squad Northern Consolidated past Manila Beer in the Reinforced Conference Finals in 1985 before setting the standard in bench tactics a few years later with San Miguel Beer.

That guest stint also earned a nomination for business tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, who bankrolled Northern Consolidated in several international competitions.

Paner stands just 6-foot-2 but was the first center and player to command a lucrative salary in the league—P8,000 a month in the mid-1970s—while playing for San Miguel.

Also nominated were Norman Black and Glenn McDonald, two great imports of different eras who led their respective teams to championships.

BLACK

JACOBS

The final selection will be held on April 8 after the Honors Committee deliberates for the last time on March 20.

Also nominated were late commentators Pinggoy Pengson and Romy Kintanar, former Toyota coach Dante Silverio, founding league president Domingo Itchon, flashy guard Danny Florencio, former MVPs Alfredo Hubalde and Abet Guidaben and deceased sports editor Tony Siddayao.

The Honors Committee is made up of PBA chair Ricky Vargas, vice chair Tony Chua, former chair Ely Capacio, Joaqui Trillo, PBA commissioner Noli Eala, Freddie Webb, two members each from the print and broadcast media, and former commissioner Jun Bernardino.

The nominations committee is comprised of Franz Pumaren, who served as chair, Fritz Gaston, columnists Quinito Henson and Ronnie Nathanielsz, Tempo's Tito Talao, PBA basketball operations head Rickie Santos, technical committee chief Perry Martinez, and media bureau director Willy Marcial.

ALI PEEK of Coca-Cola gets fouled by Talk 'N Text guard Patrick Fran on his way to the hoop. RYAN LIM

Phone Pals rip Tigers

GAME TODAY (*Olivarez Gym, Parañaque*)
7 p.m.—Alaska vs Red Bull

By Musong R. Castillo

SAN MIGUEL BEER, ALREADY a franchise without a franchise player, found out again the hard way that it has an import who simply can't play like one.

San Miguel's sorry state took some of the luster away from Air21's 88-78 decision of the Beermen last night that sealed the Express' best-ever tournament start in the PBA while also giving them a piece of the early Fiesta Cup lead at the Araneta Coliseum.

The final score failed to reflect the fact that the Express were in control from the second quarter on, as San Miguel did not get anyone to go after Vidal Massiah who went scoreless in 19 minutes and failed to contribute to his team's cause.

"Not really, but it's a factor," Air21 coach Bo Perasol said when asked if San Miguel being depleted lessened his team's achievement. "It's a small token (franchise's best ever start), but in five years, we've never really been able to accomplish this."

Gary David topscored for the Express with 22 points, Arwind Santos tossed in 18 and completed a double-double with 10 boards as Air21 climbed into a momentary tie for the lead with Red Bull and Alaska at 2-0.

Brandon Cablay scattered 17 points and Wesley Gonzales had 12, but none really played big enough for San Miguel (0-2) to threaten the Express, who assumed control in the second period and took the half, 46-37.

San Miguel played without national team appointees Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros and injured starters Danny Ildefonso and Lordy Tugade. Paul McMillan, a former Loyola at Illinois standout, is reportedly arriving to take Massiah's slot.

While San Miguel thirsted for a go-to-guy, the case was entirely different for Talk 'N Text in the first game.

JJ Sullinger scored 19 points in the third period and a total of 35, and Egay Billones came off the bench to shoot of his 12 in the fourth that powered the Phone Pals to a 102-87 victory over Coca-Cola.

Their performances hardly made anyone notice the vacuum left by three stalwarts who are on loan to the National Team as the Phone Pals rebounded from a loss in their debut to improve to 1-1 while denying the Tigers the solo lead.

Coca-Cola scored baskets in trickles in the fourth period, as a 73-74 deficit at the start of the quarter ballooned to irreversible proportions right in its early minutes that dealt the Tigers their first loss in three games.

The scores:

First Game

TALK 'N TEXT 102—Sullinger 35, Washington 21, Billones 12, Allado 10, Cardona 8, Carey 7, De Ocampo 4, Belano 3, Fran 2, Pablo 0.

COCA-COLA 87—Johnson 39, Arigo 17, Peek 14, Antonio 11, Yeo 2, Sotto 2, Misolas 2, Caceres 0, Mirando 0, Avenido 0, Tolomia 0.

Quarters: 28-23, 48-all, 74-73, 102-87.

Second Game

AIR21 88—David 22, Santos 18, Daniels 12, Telan 12, Se 5, Arboleda 5, Canaleta 4, Dimaunahan 4, Torion 4, Andaya 2, Bernardo 0.

SAN MIGUEL 78—Cablay 17, Gonzales 12, Wilson 11, Adducul 11, Racela 11, Pena 6, Tenorio 5, Calagulo 5; Massiah 0, Adriano 0, Rodriguez 0.

Quarters: 18-23, 46-37, 75-50, 88-78.

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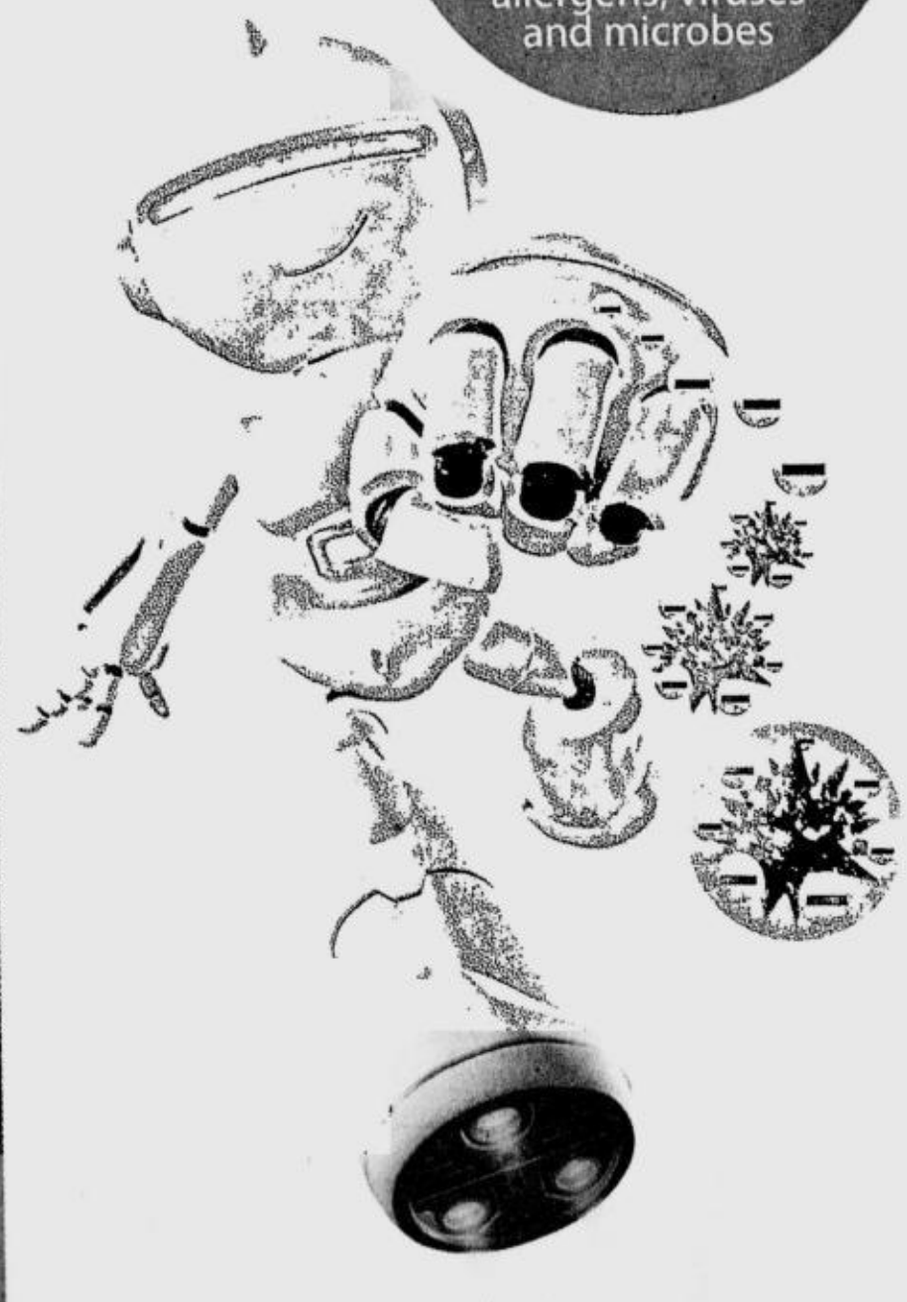

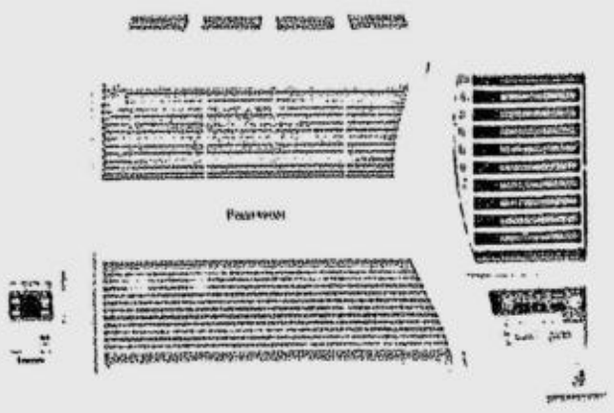

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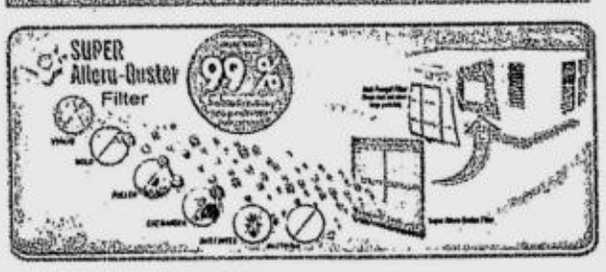

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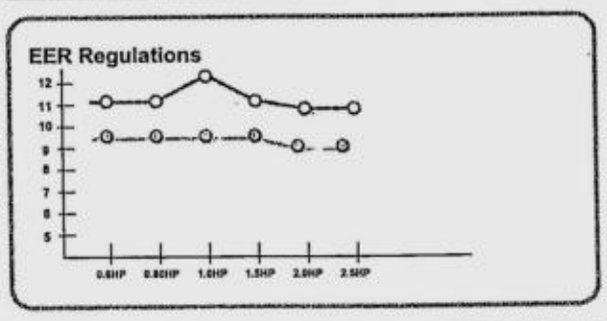
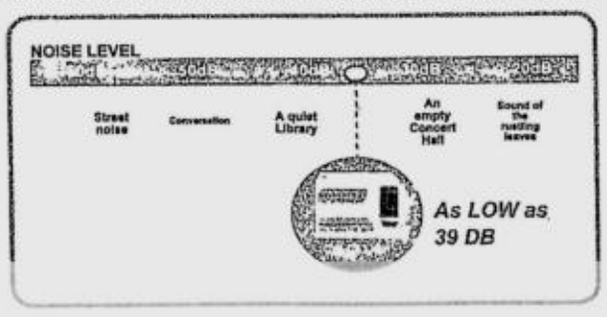


3. SUPER QUIET



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1 dead, 3 hurt in Manila diner ambush

Unidentified men shoot victims out on lunch break

By Allison W. Lopez

A MAN WAS KILLED WHILE THREE OF his companions were hurt when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them as they were eating at a roadside diner in Manila at around 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

Ricardo Elveña was declared dead on arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila while William Raymundo, Romeo Elveña and Zenaida Orber were wounded. Their two other companions, Rose Que and Romeo's wife, Nida, were unhurt.

Raymundo's injuries were reportedly serious. Nida later told the police that Raymundo was planning to run for mayor of Tubo, Abra in the May elections. Ricardo, the brother of Romeo and Rose, was his bodyguard.

The incident took place at Itcho's roadside canteen beside the LCS building owned by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson on San Andres corner Diamante Streets in Manila.

Initial investigation showed that the three unidentified men surrounded the victims and shot them while they were eating.

Rico Omoyon, the canteen owner, said that after the shooting, one of the suspects grabbed Nida's bag and bracelet and then fled on board a motorcycle.

Chief Insp. Alex Yanquiling of the Manila Police District homicide division said the bracelet was worth P75,000.

LCS Building security guard Joffrey Nolasco said the victims had just left the building several minutes before the incident. He recognized Que, he added, because she was a frequent visitor.

Nolasco added that he rushed immediately rushed outside the building when he heard the gunshots, but the suspects had already fled.

"Everything was over in 10 to 15 seconds," Nolasco said.

On Dec. 16, 2006, Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin was shot dead outside a Quezon City church after attending a wedding. The province was later declared an area of immediate concern by the Commission on Elections after Gov. Vicente Valera was linked by a suspect to Bersamin's murder. The suspect, however, later recanted his testimony.

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Ken Done

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DPWH junks mayors' plea on bridge repair

By Leila B. Salaverria

INVOKING PUBLIC SAFETY, THE DEPartment of Public Works and Highways rejected the plea of mayors of the Camanava area (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela cities) to postpone the rehabilitation of the Tullahan Bridge in Valenzuela for two months.

DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan said the department would just improve the traffic rerouting scheme by adding more alternative routes. A rerouting scheme will be in place when the Tullahan Bridge is fully or partially closed to traffic for the rehabilitation work.

But he added that the repairs could no longer be delayed.

"We cannot postpone it because public safety is at at risk. We cannot compromise public safety," Bonoan said in a phone interview when asked about the mayors' request coursed through a letter.

He said the mayors—Recom Echiverri of Malabon, Toby Tiangco of Navotas, Malabon's Canuto Oreta and Sherwin Gatchalian of Valenzuela—are aware of the DPWH's stand on the importance of rehabilitating the 73-year-old Tullahan bridge that connects Valenzuela, Malabon and Manila to Bulacan.

The DPWH wants the bridge repaired immediately because its steel parts are already corroded.

By Friday, the bridge would either be partially or fully closed in preparation for the repair work, and the new traffic rerouting scheme would be tested.

According to Bonoan, the DPWH has been working with local government units to add more routes that vehicles could use as alternate routes.

The final traffic rerouting scheme would be ready by Friday, he said.

Asked about reports that the earlier dry run of a traffic rerouting scheme resulted in massive traffic jams, Bonoan said that was usually the case when new traffic routes are implemented. But he added that people will eventually have to get used to new traffic schemes.

The Camanava mayors sought the 60-day reprieve in the Tullahan Bridge's closure to give them more time to address traffic concerns that would arise from the closure.

They said the dry run showed that the earlier routes designated as alternatives could not accommodate the huge volume of vehicles that use the bridge.

Prosecutor loses bid to cite Leviste, docs for contempt

By DJ Yap

A MAKATI COURT JUNKED YESTERDAY A motion by the prosecution to cite former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste and his doctors for contempt for allegedly conspiring to extend his stay in the hospital.

Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 said the motion by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco to cite Leviste for indirect contempt was "insufficient in form and substance."

Also covered by the motion were physicians Raynato Kasilag and Ramon Liboro, who, along with Leviste, were accused of "belittling, degrading, obstructing, interrupting and embarassing" the court. Alameda said the motion was rendered moot by Leviste's return to the Makati City Jail last Saturday.

The contempt proceedings stemmed from a court order dated March 6 directing the Makati City jail warden to take custody of Leviste after his discharge from the Makati Medical Center.

At the time of the filing of Velasco's motion, Leviste, charged with the murder of his longtime aide Rafael de las Alas, was still in the hospital where he was being treated for hypertension and gastrointestinal bleeding.

Velasco argued that the doctors had indicated to the court that Leviste would be discharged within 72 hours. Alameda noted, however, that the doctors did not categorically state when Leviste could leave the hospital. "Besides, it's a difference of only two days," he said.

Velasco, on the other hand, said he would file a motion for reconsideration, which would include the management of the MMC as respondents. The court also junked a motion by Leviste to defer his March 21 arraignment pending the resolution of his application for bail. Another motion by Leviste for his indefinite transfer from the city jail to the MMC, or as an alternative, the city-run Ospital ng Makati, was submitted for resolution.

Melanie visits Binay, but it isn't what you think

By DJ Yap

NOT A FEW HEADS TURNED WHEN beauty queen-turned-actress Melanie Marquez made a surprise appearance at the Makati City Hall yesterday for a private audience with Mayor Jejomar Binay.

The presence of Marquez, who has a son with Sen. Lito Lapid, quickly fueled speculation among employees and reporters that she would throw her support behind the incumbent mayor.

Lapid is planning to run for Makati mayor against Binay.

As it turned out, Lapid had no need to worry. "This is not about politics. I'm here to promote my church," Marquez told reporters shortly before her closed-door meeting with Binay.

The former Miss International said she did not want to involve herself in the upcoming electoral showdown between Binay and her former partner.

No politics for Melanie. ROMY HOMILLADA

"I won't be campaigning. I won't even be here during the elections. My family and I will be in the United States," she said.

Asked who between the two would get her support, Marquez only said: "No comment."

Later, during Binay's regular Wednesday press conference, the mayor said he and Marquez only talked about a dental and medical mission being proposed by the church she belongs to, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

According to Binay, the city health office rejected the proposal as it did not comply with an existing ordinance requiring the prior screening of physicians and dentists who would participate in the mission.

"I explained to her that we do not prohibit the holding of free medical and dental missions, but we regulate these to guard against unprofessional practices," he said. "We never talked about Lapid."

At the same press conference, the mayor said he believes Lapid would have a hard time courting Makati voters, since city residents had spurned newcomers in favor of tried-and-tested leaders.

"The voters here are intelligent. Which is not to say intelligent voters won't vote for him, but rather, they would opt for someone who has a good track record," he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

He added that Lapid's attention would be divided, as his son Mark would have a hard time defending his gubernatorial seat in his hometown of Pampanga. "I think if Lito runs there instead, he might win. You have to give that to him," said Binay, who is also president of the United Opposition.

No stopping depot closure—Atienza

By Allison W. Lopez

MEETING WITH OIL EXECUTIVES YESTERday, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said he relayed his "firm stance" in enforcing Ordinance No. 8027 closing the Pandacan depot.

"I told them the city could no longer accept the same reasoning put forward in 2000 that it would be impossible to close the depot. That was six years ago. The industry should be able to say 'we can relocate ourselves,'" he said.

Petron spokesperson Virginia Ruivivar said the mayor explained to them their position, and that he had no choice but to implement the law. "So what we will do is go back to our respective heads and assess our situation," she said.

On Monday, the oil companies filed a motion for leave to intervene in the Ordinance No. 8027 case decided by the Supreme Court last week. Ruivivar said the motion "might have an impact on the relocation timetable.

Atienza said the file for leave would not affect his position. "They filed the motion even if I was the respondent in the case. That is their legal remedy, but it should not change our position in any way," he said.

In a previous interview, Ruivivar said they were considering Harbour Centre off Manila Bay in Tondo as one of their choices. This time, however, she said she could not comment since it was just "an option."

Mayor Atienza also denied specifying Harbour Centre as the new site, clarifying that he was all for putting the depot beside the bay but not necessarily in Harbour Centre.

"That is the safest place for an oil depository. That is how Singapore and Hong Kong did it. " he said.

The other day, Councilor Benjamin Asilo junked the Harbour Centre proposal, saying the new Smokey Mountain dump, also in Tondo, was enough of a problem for residents.

PSALM Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (*"PSALM"*) Privatization, Bids and Award Committee (*"The Committee"*) invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the second round of bidding for the privatization of the,

600 MW Masinloc Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant located at Masinloc, Zambales

(the "Asset"). The Asset is being privatized on an "as is where is" basis and will include a power supply allocation.

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest (*"LOI"*) to the PSALM Privatization Bids and Awards Committee (the "*Committee*") which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. All LOIs must be received by the Committee at the PSALM Office with address at 4th Floor Bankmer Building, 6756 Ayala Avenue, Makati City not later than 5:00 p.m. on 12 April 2007, (the *"LOI Submission Deadline"*). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, both in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S.$2,000.00) (the *"Participation Fee"*). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking, and Participation Fee must be received by the Committee on or before 5:00 p.m. on 13 April 2007 to entitle an interested party any further participation in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Package which includes the bidding procedures shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 29 March 2007 until 30 April 2007 (the *"Deadline"*) at the PSALM Office. In accordance with the bidding procedures, only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package by the Deadline or a consortium which includes an interested party will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence	29 March – 19 July 2007
Pre-bid Conference	8 May 2007, 2:00 PM at the PSALM Office
Bid Submission Deadline	26 July 2007, 12:00 noon at the PSALM Office

References to the dates and times shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to nine million U. S. Dollars (U.S.$ 9,000,000.00) in the form of an irrevocable standby letter of credit which must be acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guaranty prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction. The details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Award Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 892-6123 or (632)848-0263, fax number (632) 840-3896 or e-mail address **fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.**

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) **RAPHAEL P. M. LOTILLA**
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – March 15, 16 and 17, 2007)

Suspected drug pushers nabbed

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AGENTS OF THE PHILIPPINE DRUG Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (AIDSOTF) of the Philippine National Police arrested a Taiwanese and two Filipinos suspected of distributing shabu and ketamine both here and abroad on Tuesday night.

The suspects were identified as Chen Tien Chang, 52, also known as Hsieh Tien Chan and Joseph Sia; Eusebio Valenzuela, 39; and Cesar Valenzuela, 54.

Agents arrested Chen and Eusebio inside Unit 805 of China Plaza on Tambacan Street in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Cesar was later arrested in his house in Novaliches, Quezon City.

Seized from Chen and Eusebio's condominium unit were P6.5 million worth of drugs consisting of three kilos of ketamine powder, 112 grams of shabu, assorted drug paraphernalia, drug packaging equipment, nearly P50,000 in cash and several checks.

According to the police, Chen has been hiding in the country to evade arrest after a warrant was issued against him by the Pao Chiao district court in Taiwan for his involvement in a gang rape case. Eusebio, on the other hand, has a pending warrant for his arrest on drug pushing charges. The warrant was issued by a court in Bulacan.

In a press conference, PDEA chief Dionisio Santiago said the three were previously arrested for selling ketamine. They were later released after the charges against them were dropped.

METROBRIEFS

2 killed in Manila fire

SHE WENT back to save her grandmother, but in the end, both of them died in the attempt. Mary Grace Camarote, 26, and her 80-year-old grandmother, Genoveva Pamintuan, died in the fire that began in their two-story house on T. Anzures Street in Sampaloc, Manila yesterday afternoon. "We found their bodies at the bottom of the stairs. They were locked in an embrace when we found them," said SFO2 Manuel Gaspar of the Manila Fire Department. Camarote, he said, ran back into the house to rescue her grandmother but both ended up trapped inside the burning structure. The blaze began at 12:26 p.m. and reached the fifth alarm before it was put out by Manila firefighters at 1:07 p.m. Five other houses were burned. Damage was estimated at P1 million.

Allison W. Lopez

Close call

A HOUSE owned by Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. in Marikina City sustained minimal damage after a blaze broke out in his neighbor's house yesterday afternoon. The fire started at the second floor of the house owned by Pimentel's neighbor, Rachel Tomblod, at 3 Gallant Street Fairlane Subdivision, said Marikina City fire marshal, Chief Insp. Antonio Razon. No one was hurt in the fire that was put out after an hour and before it could spread to neighboring houses. Razon said the fire only destroyed the exhaust fan located at the back of Pimentel's house and parts of the roof.

Kristine L. Alave

Spiritual seminar

AN INTRODUCTORY seminar on spiritual teachings from the Ascended Masters made practical for the modern era will be conducted from March 16 to 17 at La Colina Hall, Valle Verde Country Club, Pasig City by a team from the Arizona-based Temple of the Presence. The focus of the seminar is the "reawakening of Sons and Daughters of God" to their inner and true identity. All sessions will include open forums. A token registration fee of P100 will be charged each participant. Snacks will be served. For inquiries about the seminar, please call 0927-2443840, 0919-4572040 and 0917-5059925.

DID YOU KNOW

PHILCOA in Diliman, Quezon City stands for Philippine Coconut Authority, the sole government agency tasked to oversee the development of coconut and other palm oil industries. Philcoa, which holds office on the city's elliptical road, was created in 1973 by Presidential Decree 232. It is an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

TROs for sale at Court of Appeals?

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

CHIEF JUSTICE REYNATO PUNO HAS ordered the Court of Appeals to report to him the number of temporary restraining orders (TROs) the appellate court has issued since January this year.

Puno has been irked by reports that TROs and decisions by the appellate court could be bought.

My spy at the Court of Appeals says that a TRO costs a minimum of P500,000 and a maximum of P30 million.

A permanent injunction, which is more powerful and binding than a TRO, costs much, much more, according to my spy.

My mole at the Supreme Court told me earlier the Chief Justice was planning to abolish the appellate court branch in Cebu and have all its members recalled to Manila. This was after he learned that most of the justices at the Court of Appeals-Cebu could be bought.

This column has suggested that the Chief Justice not only bear down hard on CA-Cebu but on the whole Court of Appeals, including the one in Cagayan de Oro.

* * *

There is a twist in the P315-million oil smuggling and tax evasion cases exposed in this space last week.

It turned out that one of the accused, Norman Galera, is now crying foul for being named the co-accused in the crime even if it was he who initiated the complaint against Oilink International Corp. owner Paul Co and fellow brokers Noel Aro and Rolando Valeriano.

"I pity Galera, Mon," said a source. "He just wanted to do a good turn for his country, and yet he's become like Acsa Ramirez," said a source.

Acsa Ramirez was a Landbank executive who was mistaken for one of the accused in a lineup for the media by President Macapagal-Arroyo even if it was she who blew the whistle on a scam in the bank.

Galera, who manages a brokerage firm along with Aro and Valeriano, went to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) to admit that his firm had been helping Co smuggle oil by the hundreds of million of pesos since 2003.

He also provided documents and described the alleged modus operandi. Galera said he came out because he felt he was being used by Aro and Valeriano.

But instead of hailing him as a hero, the CIDG charged him as an accomplice.

Galera, like Ramirez, must have now realized that there is no justice under the Arroyo administration.

* * *

I'm a firm believer in the universal law of karma. You reap what you sow.

If you do harm to your fellowman, the harm you inflicted will sooner or later come back to you.

Conversely, if you do your fellowman a good turn, your deed will return to you in like measure.

No karmic debt in this world ever goes unpaid.

Using the tools of information technology, anyone can destroy another person's reputation simply by using the Internet or circulating a "white paper."

I sympathize with those who are at the receiving end of these reports. I, too, have been the victim of malicious gossip and fabricated charges.

The subject of gossip can console himself with the thought that the one responsible for spreading it will sooner or later have the same bitter experience he's having now.

Tax raps readied vs Thaksin's relatives

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S ATTORNEY general recommended that criminal tax evasion charges be filed against deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's wife, her secretary and her brother, an official said Wednesday.

If the case is accepted by the Bangkok Criminal Court it would mark the first prosecution of those close to Thaksin, who was deposed by a September coup and accused of widespread corruption. Other allegations of wrongdoing are still under investigation.

"The attorney general has ordered a lawsuit be filed," Attapol Yaisawang, spokesperson for the Attorney General's Office told a news conference.

He said the three must present themselves to the Attorney General's Office within 10 days or arrest warrants might be issued.

The court would still have to accept the case, but that is usually a formality, said Attapol.

An investigation by the Assets Examination Committee, a panel appointed by the coup leaders to investigate corruption linked to Thaksin's regime, had urged the Attorney General's Office last month to forward the case to the Criminal Court.

The panel found that Pojaman Shinawatra—Thaksin's wife—and her brother Bhanapot Damapong failed to pay about 546 million baht, or about $16 million according to the current exchange rate, in taxes.

The two would face a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison and a 400,000 baht ($12,200) fine each if convicted on two tax evasion counts for which they will be charged, Attapol said.

The secretary, Kanchanapa Honghern, would face a maximum penalty of seven years and a 200,000 baht ($6,100) fine because she is facing only one charge. *AP*

Taiwan students form Nazi movement

TAIPEI—A GROUP OF TAIwanese university students has set up a Nazi political movement advocating national unity, strength and curbing immigration, the group's co-founder said Wednesday.

The National Socialism Association currently has 20 paid-up members, with another 800 who have used the group's web site to indicate an interest in joining, co-founder Chao Lahn, 24, said.

The site is emblazoned with a Nazi swastika and says the group's ranks are reserved for people "who do not dislike (Adolf) Hitler," the Nazi dictator whose regime systematically murdered six million Jews during World War II.

But Chao, studying for his graduate degree in political science at Taipei's prestigious National Chengchi University, denied he was anti-Jewish, and maintained his intention was to foster greater nationalism in Taiwan, an island of 23 million people off China's southeastern coast.

"My main goal is to develop Taiwan's strength and to foster national unity," Chao said. "I think we have to work hard to restore traditional Chinese values like Confucianism."

Rafi Gamzou, director of the Israeli representative office in Taipei, deplored the emergence of the Nazi movement in Taiwan.

"This is an upsetting and worrisome phenomenon," he said. "I believe the educational sector of Taiwan should question itself about how come a group of young people, some with academic backgrounds, decided to worship the monstrous Adolf Hitler."

While high school and university courses do cover the European experience during World War II, relatively few Taiwanese understand the revulsion—and the reasons for it—that Nazism conjures up in the West.

Hitler images and iconography have sometimes been used to promote commercial products in Taiwan—including a now-closed Nazi-themed restaurant—on the grounds that the German leader symbolized strength.

There is no indigenous Jewish community on the island, and most Taiwanese seem confused by distinctions among European populations and religions.

Chao, who said he had taken courses on modern European history in high school and college, told The Associated Press his group would apply to Taiwan's Interior Ministry to be recognized as an official organization. He said the group would hold its inaugural convention in the central city of Taichung on Saturday.

Interior Ministry official Lu Ching-yen said a decision on the group's application would be made when it is received.

"The process for handling the application will depend on (its) substance," he said.

Chao declined to say how many people the group expected for Saturday's meeting, but indicated that many would be high school students. *AP*

A LARGE Taiwanese advertisement showing a cartoon of a smiling Adolf Hitler supporting German-made electric space heaters with the English translation of "Declare war on the cold front!" printed across the top hangs on the wall of a popular subway station, in Taipei. AP

ANIMAL PLAY. A piglet plays with a tiger cub at a park in Guangzhou, in south China's Guangdong March 13. The tiger cub was abandoned by its mother and is being raised by a sow. REUTERS

Top US military commander's comments on gays prompt outrage

WASHINGTON—THE US MILITARY's top officer called homosexual acts immoral in an interview published Tuesday, sparking outrage among gay rights advocates and reopening a debate on a ban on gays openly serving in the military.

The controversy prompted US Defense Secretary Robert Gates to say "personal opinion doesn't really have a place here," while reaffirming the Defense Department's duty to carry out the so-called "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

General Peter Pace's remarks set off angry reactions from gay rights advocates and calls by some Democrats to review the 1993 law that allows gays to serve only if they do not declare their sexual orientation or engage in homosexual conduct.

Pace, the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Chicago Tribune he supported the policy because, "I believe homosexual acts between two individuals are immoral and that we should not condone immoral acts," Pace said. "I do not believe the United States is well served by a policy that says it is OK to be immoral in any way." He later issued a statement that sought to blunt the impact of his remarks. "I should have focused more on my support of the policy and less on my personal moral views," he said.

Asked his view of "don't ask, don't tell," Gates told the Pentagon's television channel, "I think personal opinion really doesn't have a place here." He said it was his responsibility to carry out the law "as effectively as we can. As long as the law is what it is, that's what we'll do." Rep. Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House of Representatives, said the military "should carefully consider changing their policy." "We need the most talented people, we need the language skills, we need patriotic Americans who exist across the board in our population. We don't need a moral judgment from the chairman of Joint Chiefs," she said, alluding to numerous linguists, especially Arabic speakers, who have been discharged.

Joe Solomonese, president of Human Rights Campaign, said Pace's comments "were irresponsible, offensive and a slap in the face to the gay men and women who are currently serving their country with honor and bravery." The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), another advocacy group that has represented soldiers dismissed from the military because of their sexual orientation, demanded an apology. *AFP*

Angelina Jolie to adopt Vietnamese boy

HO CHI MINH CITY—ANGELINA Jolie was expected to arrive in Vietnam late Wednesday night to adopt a 3-year-old boy, adoption officials said.

Jolie was expected to attend an adoption ceremony with Vietnamese officials in Ho Chi Minh City on Thursday morning, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the matter.

After she receives the child, Jolie will meet with US consular officials, who must review the adoption before a passport can be issued for the boy.

If all goes according to plan, Jolie could bring the child home by the weekend, officials said.

The boy has been living at the Tam Binh orphanage on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City since he was abandoned at a hospital as an infant, according to adoption officials.

Shortly after he arrived at the orphanage, the Tam Binh staff tried unsuccessfully to locate the boy's birth parents.

The boy is healthy, friendly and a little bit shy, they said. He gets along well with other children and loves to play soccer.

Jolie filed adoption papers as a single parent, because she and her superstar partner Brad Pitt are not married.

JOLIE AFP

The couple have three children: 5-year-old Maddox, adopted from Cambodia; 2-year-old Zahara, adopted from Ethiopia; and another daughter, Shiloh, who was born to the couple in May.

The pair made a surprise visit to the Tam Binh orphanage at Thanksgiving, when they were spotted cruising around Ho Chi Minh City on a motorbike. Their pictures were splashed across Vietnamese newspapers and magazines.

During that visit, they stayed at Ho Chi Minh City's newest luxury hotel, the Park Hyatt, which is located close to the Ho Chi Minh City Ministry of Justice, where Thursday's adoption ceremony is expected to be held.

Jolie is a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and has traveled extensively to countries in the developing world.

Her 2001 film "Tomb Raider" was filmed in Cambodia, which borders Vietnam.

Jolie and Pitt starred together in the 2005 movie "Mr. and Mrs. Smith."

Jolie's security team had arrived in Ho Chi Minh City earlier Wednesday to lay the groundwork for the star's arrival, adoption officials said.

After the adoption of Jolie's newest child is complete, she is expected to visit the Tam Binh orphanage to play with the children who live there, adoption officials said.

Vietnam suspended its adoption programs for several years due to concerns that children were being trafficked and exploited. After the government implemented new regulations to address those concerns, the United States and Vietnam signed a new adoption agreement in 2005. *AP*

Memorial service for Diana set

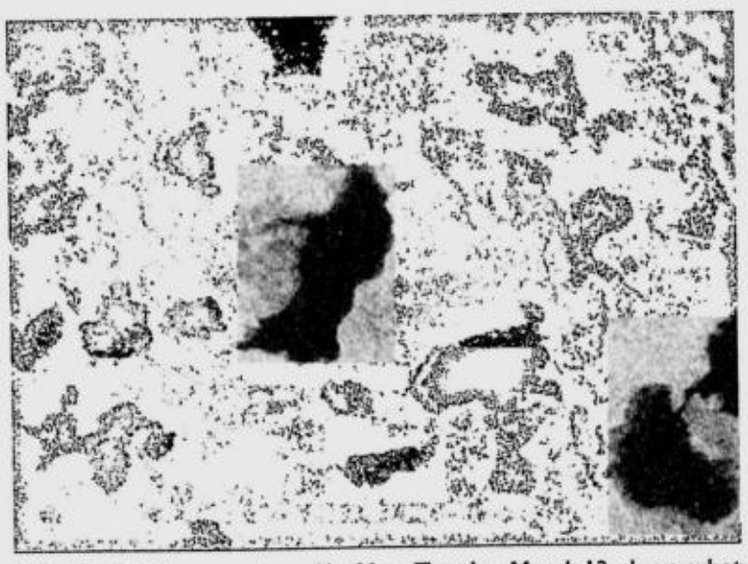
LONDON—A FAMILY MEMORIal service to mark the 10th anniversary of the death of Diana, princess of Wales is to be held in a London chapel on Aug. 31, British royal officials said Tuesday.

The service will be attended by her sons, Princes William and Harry, as well as Prince Charles, from whom Diana was divorced, and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, his second wife.

It will take place 10 years to the day after she died in a Paris car crash and will be held at the Guards' Chapel, the regimental place of worship for William and Harry, who are both serving in the Household Division of the British Army.

The venue was chosen ahead of two others in London with particular significance in Diana's life—Saint Paul's Cathedral, where she married Charles, and Westminster Abbey, where her funeral was held.

About 500 people are expected to be invited, including Diana's brother, Earl Charles Spencer—who gave a controversial speech at her funeral—her sisters and friends. *AFP*



THIS RADAR image released by Nasa Tuesday, March 13, shows what scientists believe to be sea-size bodies of liquid, shown in black, on the surface of Saturn's largest moon Titan. AP

Scientists find hydrocarbon seas on Saturn's moon Titan

LOS ANGELES—SCIENTISTS for the first time have discovered what appear to be sea-size bodies of liquid on the surface of Saturn's largest moon, including one about as big as the Caspian Sea on Earth.

The discovery by the international Cassini spacecraft was welcomed by researchers, who have long theorized that Titan possessed hydrocarbon seas because of methane and other organic compounds in its thick, largely nitrogen atmosphere. Until now, Cassini had only spotted clusters of small lakes on the planet-size moon.

"They're very obvious. There's nothing subtle about them," said Cassini scientist Jonathan Lunine of the University of Arizona, Tucson.

Researchers using visual and radar imaging uncovered evidence of at least two seas on Titan's hazy north pole.

Cassini's camera last month imaged a large, irregular feature stretching 1,094 kilometers long with a surface area similar to the landlocked Caspian Sea. Its radar instrument swept over the feature's northern tip and determined it likely contains liquid methane or ethane because of its smooth appearance. However, scientists do not know whether the entire area is filled with liquid.

The spacecraft also discerned another body one-fifth that size. With a surface area of about 119,140 sq. km, it is larger than Lakes Superior and Ontario combined, scientists said.

While there is no scientific definition of what constitutes a lake or sea on Titan, the newly found features are significantly larger than previously discovered bodies of liquid on the frigid moon and should be considered seas, Lunine said.

Results were presented Tuesday at the annual Lunar and Planetary Science Conference in Texas.

Titan is one of the few objects in the outer solar system that possesses a significant atmosphere, and scientists have long puzzled over its source. Methane is a flammable gas on Earth but liquid on Titan because of the moon's intense atmospheric pressure and cold.

Judging by their sizes and depths, Lunine said the newly discovered seas likely are not responsible for replenishing the long-term methane found in the moon's atmosphere. Instead, Lunine said that source likely comes from underground methane reservoirs that vent to the surface. *AP*

WorldBriefs

Suicide blasts kill 8 in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A suicide bomber struck a market in northern Iraq on Wednesday, killing at least eight people and wounding 25, police said. The explosion occurred just before noon as the market was crowded with shoppers in Tuz Khormato, 210 kilometers north of Baghdad. Northern Iraq has seen a recent rise in violence that many blame on insurgents fleeing a security crackdown in the capital. The city, which is mixed but consists mainly of Turkomen, is 55 km south of oil-rich Kirkuk. In western Baghdad, a suicide car bomber slammed into an Iraqi army checkpoint in the Sunni neighborhood of Yarmouk , killing two civilians and wounding four others, police said. *AP*

Saddam's sons reburied

TIKRIT—The remains of Saddam Hussein's two sons were exhumated and reburied next to the executed ex-president in a hall in their home village of Awjah in northern Iraq on Tuesday, a relative told AFP. Uday and Qusay, killed by US troops in Mosul in July 2003, were earlier buried in a cemetery in the village, just outside the city of Tikrit. "But today we dug up their remains and reburied them next to Saddam Hussein in the hall where he was laid to rest," the relative said on condition of anonymity. Saddam was buried on Dec. 31 after his hanging for crimes against humanity. The hall where the three are buried used to be a gathering place for condolence meetings under the ousted regime. *AFP*

Kabul explosion kills 6

KABUL—A huge blast in an ammunition shop in the heart of the Afghan capital killed at least six people and wounded 10 on Wednesday, officials said. Several shops were leveled and bystanders tore at the rubble with their hands to haul out survivors. "Two of my nephews were killed. We don't know what caused it but it was a loud and terrible explosion," a weeping Haji Qutubuddin said at the scene. "God knows better what was the cause." An Interior Minister spokesperson said at least six people were killed and 10 hurt and rescuers were still combing the site looking for more dead or injured. "The blast occured in a shop selling gunpowder and other ammunition for hunting rifles," Ali Shah Paktiawal, Kabul police crime branch chief, said. *Reuters*

US threatens measures vs Sudan

WASHINGTON—The United States and others will consider imposing punitive measures on Sudan for its refusal to allow an international force into the devastated Darfur region, the State Department said on Tuesday. US State Department spokesperson Tom Casey told reporters Washington was increasingly impatient over what he called Sudan's "delaying tactics" over sending a joint African Union-United Nations force into Darfur. Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir sent a letter to the United Nations this month arguing in detail against UN plans to bolster under-financed AU military monitors. Casey declined to say what the measures would be but US officials in the past have indicated they could include a range of financial measures against Sudan's government. *Reuters*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

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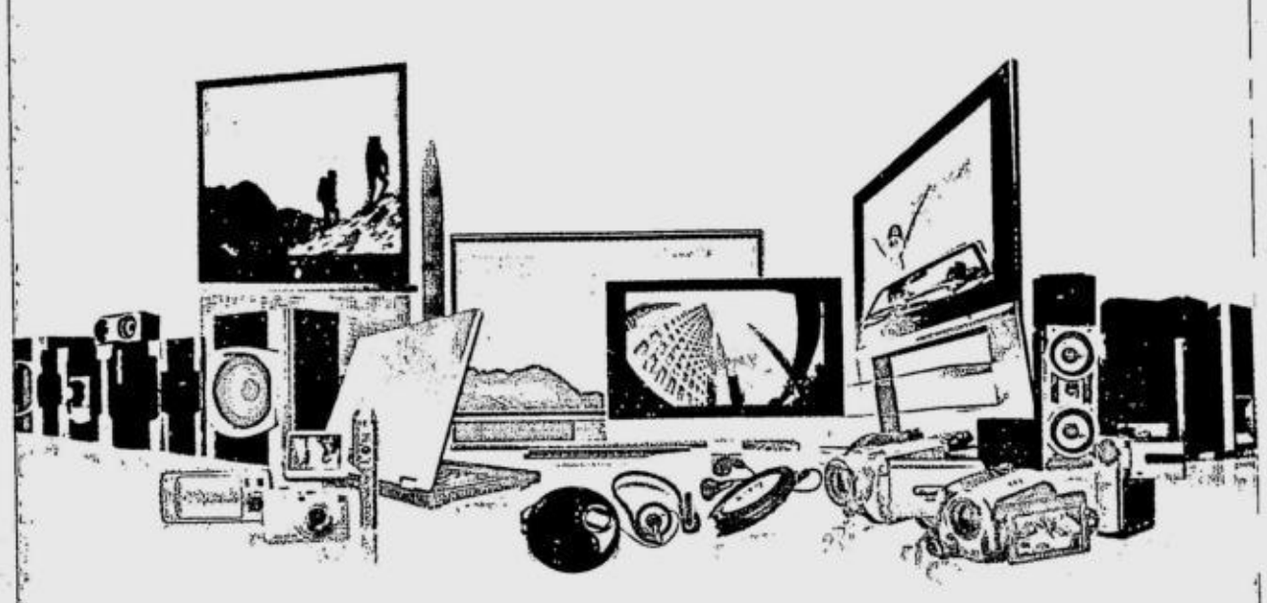

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GLOBAL WARMING

World faces food, water crisis by 2100

OSLO—GLOBAL WARMING COULD cause severe food and water shortages for millions of people by 2100 and trigger a melt of polar ice that could keep ocean levels rising for centuries, a draft UN report shows.

It said the poor were most at risk, for instance in sub-Saharan Africa and around deltas of major rivers in Asia.

The survey by the world's top climate scientists, due for release in Brussels on April 6, said climate change widely blamed on human activities was already under way with impacts ranging from melting glaciers to earlier than normal plant growth in spring.

"Many natural systems, on all continents and in some oceans, are being affected by regional climate changes, particularly temperature increases," according to a copy seen by Reuters. The draft will have a final review by governments and experts.

"Impacts are very likely to increase due to increased frequencies and intensities of extreme weather impacts," the draft said. It said there were still chances to prevent the most damaging impacts if governments acted.

It pointed to threats such as a melting of Greenland and west Antarctic ice sheets that could cause sea levels to rise, extinctions of species from the Amazon to the Arctic or more severe heat waves in US cities.

"Climate change increases the number of people at risk of hunger marginally," it said, compared to projected declines caused by economic growth. But a large rise in temperatures could put up to 120 million people at risk of hunger.

A melting of glaciers, such as in the Himalayas, could cut summer and autumn flows in regions where more than a billion people live.

Farmers near the equator were likely to suffer falling crop yields even with small temperature rises, while farmers living nearer the poles might see some immediate benefits.

"Global agricultural production potential is likely to increase with increases in global average temperature up to about 3 Celsius, but above this is very likely to decrease," the draft said.

Hundreds of millions of people would suffer from water scarcity even with a small rise in temperatures. *Reuters*

Limits on carbon emissions proposed

LONDON—BRITAIN ON Tuesday became the first country to propose legislation setting binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions as it stepped up its campaign for a new global warming pact to succeed the Kyoto Protocol.

In its draft Climate Change Bill, the government said carbon dioxide emissions had to be cut by at least 60 percent by 2050, set out five-year carbon budgets to reach the target and created an independent monitoring committee to check annual progress.

Prime Minister Tony Blair put climate change at the top of the international agenda when Britain was head of the Group of Eight industrialized nations in 2005 and it could now become the first nation to limit emissions by statute.

"This bill is an international landmark," Environment Minister David Miliband told a news conference. *Reuters*

Forests disappearing but at a slower rate—UN report

ROME—AN AREA OF FOREST twice the size of Paris disappears every day although the rate of global deforestation has started to slow, according to a United Nations report issued on Tuesday.

"Deforestation continues and it continues at an unacceptable rate, however there are signs of potential change," said Wulf Killmann, a forestry expert at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which published the report.

The destruction of forests not only reduces habitat available for wildlife but also adds to the greenhouse effect because the carbon stored in trees is released into the atmosphere.

Deforestation accounts for 18 percent of the carbon dioxide produced each year, a significant proportion of the emissions scientists say are causing global warming which also poses risks to forests via increased fires and the spread of pests.

Demand for agricultural land is one of the main reasons that forests continue to be erased at the rate of 13 million hectares a year, an area about the size of England.

However, moves by some countries to replant forests has meant the annual net loss has dropped from around 9 million hectares in the 1990s to 7.3 million, according to the "State of the World's Forests 2007" report.

A CHINESE worker marks the logs at a timber market in Shenyang, northeastern China's Liaoning province March 13. Western demand for Chinese furniture has fueled an increase of more than threefold in China's wood imports. AFP

A huge tree planting program in China, for example, more than offset large-scale deforestation in other parts of Asia such as Indonesia, to produce a net increase in the amount of forested land in the Asia-Pacific region during the first five years of the decade.

China's economic boom has driven demand for wood and the country has adopted a tree planting policy, not only to reduce its reliance on imported timber, but also for soil protection, especially in areas near the Gobi desert, Killmann said.

In Africa and Latin America, there are fewer positive signs.

Forested land in Latin America—home to the Amazon—fell to less than half of the continent's area. By 2005, forests were estimated at 47 percent of the total land, from 51 in 1990. *Reuters*

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Heat raze Jazz for 7th victory /A29

SPORTS

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PACQUIAO BOUT

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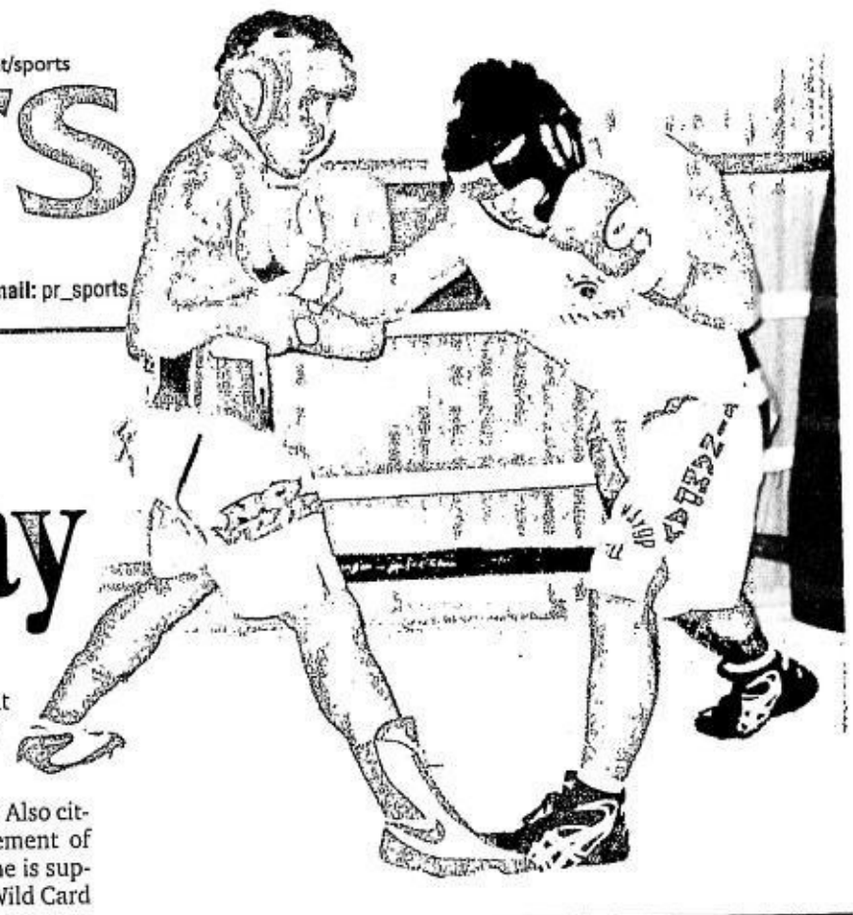

MANNY Pacquiao (left) trades punches with sparmate Arnel Tinampay. AQUILES ZONIO/INQUIRER MINDANAO

By Roy Luarca

SWITCH TO GMA-7 FOR THE MANNY PACQUIAO-JORGE Solis showdown on April 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Details of the mega-buck deal and fight coverage will be finalized when top officials of the giant network and Solar Sports meet this afternoon.

Solar Sports snatched the right to air Pacquiao's defense of his WBC international super featherweight title against the unbeaten but unheralded Mexican with an irresistible $800,000 (about P39 million) offer.

In addition, Solar Sports will reportedly pay Pacquiao P20 million more for theater, cable and other ancillary rights in the Philippines.

The Pacquiao-Solis bout, which topbills a pay-per-view card promoted by Bob Arum, will be replayed on RPN-9, where Solar Sports is a major blocktimer.

The Solar Sports-GMA-7 partnership came as a surprise because Pacquiao's earlier fights were shown over rival station ABS-CBN, including an exclusive coverage of the Filipino ring icon's showdown with Mexican Oscar Larios at the Araneta Coliseum last year.

Pacquio won over Larios via unanimous decision.

Apparently, ABS-CBN did not bite Pacquiao's proposal for a P40-million rights fee this time as Solis' drawing power remains suspect despite his impressive 32-win (23 knockouts) two-draw slate.

Pacquiao's charisma is reportedly working wonders at the tills, however, with tickets selling briskly for the bout to be staged at the Alamodome, which will be reconfigured to accommodate 20,000 fans.

Though Pacquiao has been tagged the overwhelming favorite to add the 5-foot-10 Solis to his growing list of Mexican victims that include such names as Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales, boxing pundits don't rule out an upset.

They suspect Pacquiao won't be at his best form for the fight owing to the congressional campaign he is inserting to his training schedule at the Abap Gym in General Santos City. Also cited was Pacquiao's several postponement of his trip to the United States, where he is supposed to wind up his training at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao has reportedly picked Barrera to prevail over fellow Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez in their "Moment of Truth" bout for the WBC super featherweight crown Sunday in Las Vegas.

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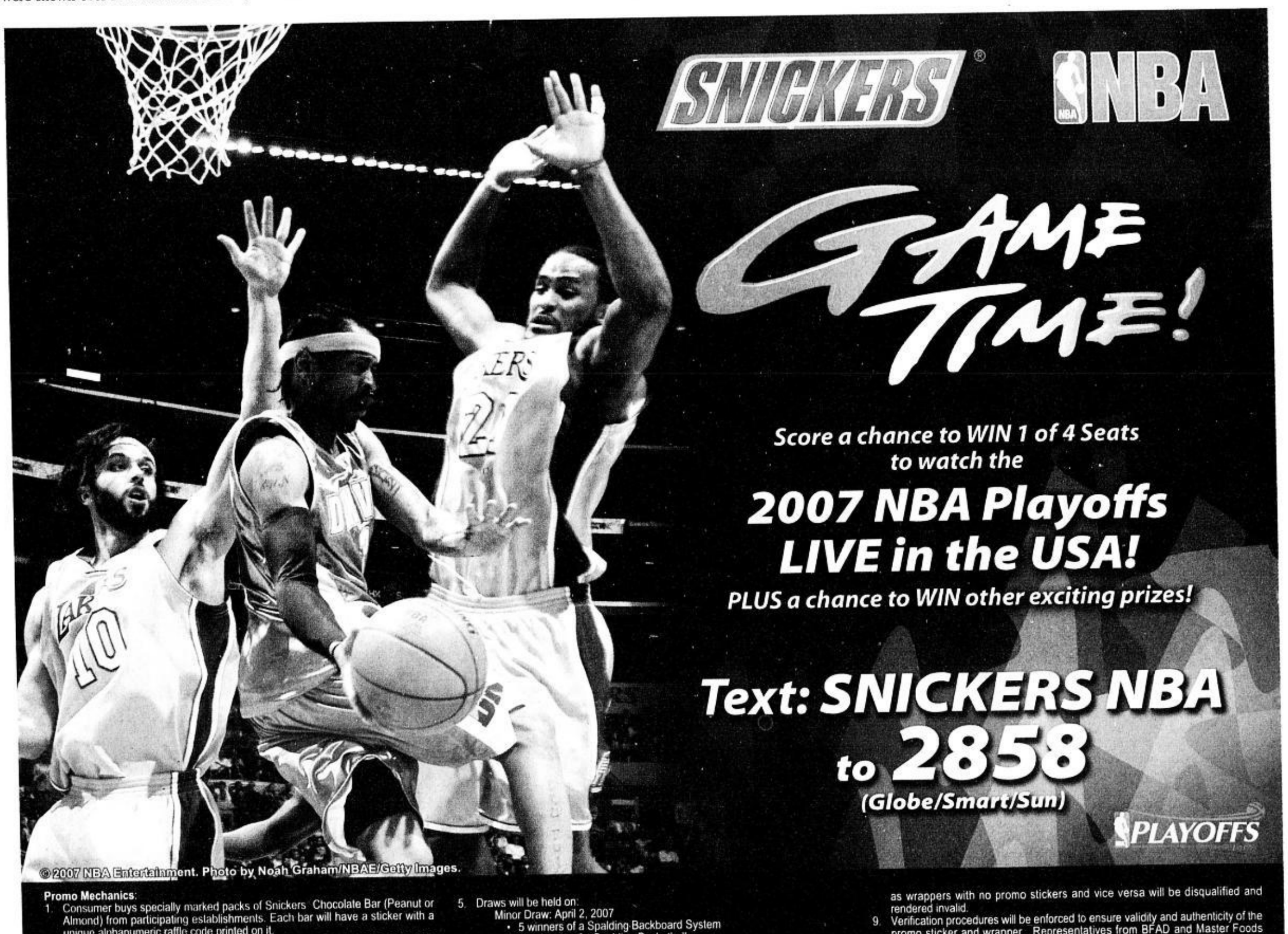

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1. Consumer buys specially marked packs of Snickers Chocolate Bar (Peanut or Almond) from participating establishments. Each bar will have a sticker with a unique alphanumeric raffle code printed on it.
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   Example: SNICKERS NBA B5678
3. Snickers Chocolate wrappers with the stickers must be kept and shall be presented for verification purposes in order to claim the prize. Promo will run from March 7 – April 30, 2007.
4. Prizes include: Total of 4 winners of a trip to the USAto watch the 2007 NBA Playoffs Game Live, 10 winners of a Spalding Backboard System, 50 winners of a Spalding Basketball.
5. Draws will be held on:
   Minor Draw: April 2, 2007
   • 5 winners of a Spalding Backboard System
   • 25 winners of a Spalding Basketball
   Grand Draw: May 1, 2007
   • 4 winners of a Trip to the USA
   • 5 winners of a Spalding Basketball System
   • 25 winners of a Spalding Basketball
6. All entries are cumulative. Non-winning entries will qualify for the succeeding draws. The more entries sent the more chances of winning.
7. Cut-off dates for the minor draw is on April 1, 2007 at 11:59pm. The Grand Draw cut-off date will be on April 30, 2007 at11:59pm.
8. Draws will be held at the Solar Sports Interactive office in the presence of a representative from BFAD, Solar Sports Interactive and Master Foods Philippines, Inc. Winners will receive a call with accompanying instructions on how to claim their prize. They must be prepared to surrender the Snickers chocolate wrapper with the winning raffle code. Damaged, altered and/or tampered stickers, as well as wrappers with no promo stickers and vice versa will be disqualified and rendered invalid.
9. Verification procedures will be enforced to ensure validity and authenticity of the promo sticker and wrapper. Representatives from BFAD and Master Foods Philippines, Inc. will conduct the verification procedures.
10. Verified winners will then be eligible to claim their prize.
11. Prizes are non-transferable and may not be converted to cash except for the grand prize. Cash equivalent of the trip to the USA is PhP 100,000.00.
12. Verified winners are solely responsible in securing their own passport and necessary visa.
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14. Children under 13 years old are not eligible to join the promo.
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Harbour Centre gets PBL green light

THE PBL YESTERDAY APPROVED THE bid of Harbour Centre to send its team—beefed up by a slew of other league superstars—to represent the country in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) Champions Cup which fires off April 9 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad himself confirmed that the league has agreed to the request of Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero to field the team to the five-day event, which will also serve as the qualifying for the Fiba-Asia club championships in Iran in September.

The Port Masters will be backed by some of the league's superstars in the endeavor which marks the first time the country will see action in international basketball competitions after getting reinstated into the Fiba (international basketball federation) following a two-year ban.

TRINIDAD

BACULI

ROMERO

Tapped to bolster the squad are Marvin Cruz and Patrick Cabahug of Toyota Balintawak, JR Quiñahan of Mail and More, Doug Kramer of Cebuana Lhuillier and 6-foot-8 Nigerian Sam Ekwe of Magnolia.

Training starts tomorrow at the RFM gym in Mandaluyong with Junel Baculi calling the shots. Toyota Balintawak's Louie Alas and Henkel Sista's Caloy Garcia will be the assistant coaches.

Harbour's Erick Arejola and Hapee's Bernard Yang have been named as coteam manager.

Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas selection committee members Junjun Capistrano, Wilson Young, Christian Tan and Lito Alvarez backed the PBL decision, which was elevated to SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan for approval.

Pangilinan has yet to give his thumbsup although some members of the committee said it would pose no problem because the country has been sending amateur clubs, powered by at least two imports, to the tournament in the past.

Expected to make it to the team are Harbour stalwarts JC Intal, Jason Castro, Jojo Duncil, Silver Cup Final MVP Chico Lanete and Final Pivotal Player Jonathan Fernandez, who helped the Port Masters win their second straight title last month.

OVER 400 SEAG BETS

POC opens doors to NSAs

By June Navarro

EXPECT A BLOATED DELEGATION OF no less than 400 athletes and officials for Team Philippines in this year's Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

This developed after the Philippine Olympic Committee opened the door for all the national sports associations to field in their best athletes for the biennial meet which will be held in three cities in Thailand with Nakhon Ratchasima as hub.

Aside from the 282 gold and silver medalists in the 2005 SEAG the country hosted, the NSAs will be asked to present a list of talented athletes to fill up the rest of the delegation. The medalists in the Doha Asian Games are also considered as top priorities.

"Of course, the Asian Games medalists are given preferential treatment," said POC deputy secretary general and swimming head Mark Joseph. "The NSA will come up with other selections outside of the medalists and justify the selections depending on their performance level."

The criteria of automatically naming the SEAG gold and silver medalists to the Thailand joust was yesterday brought up by the SEAG Task Force led by wushu's Julian Camacho, Romeo Ribaño of squash and Joseph to the POC executive board.

"The intent of the task force is that the Philippines should be represented in all events except for hockey and handball, disciplines where we don't have an NSA," said Joseph.

All the team sports will be included in the delegation, a principle that the POC had not subscribed to in the past Asian Games.

"If we send a lean and mean team, it's like killing the NSAs," said Joseph. "The SEAG is the entry level of all multisport events. We want to see that the Philippines will be represented in all levels."

A rough estimate of at least 400 athletes and officials will form the delegation, a number almost similar to the contingent sent to Vietnam in 2003.

In Thailand, a total of 441 golds are at stake in 40 sports and 43 disciplines.

Joseph said the NSAs would be asked to submit the status of their gold and silver medalists in the last SEAG for the POC to determine if these athletes are still fit to compete in Thailand.

"We want to know the status of these athletes. Are they already retired or are they currently in training? Is the event of these athletes included in the SEAG?" said Joseph. "These are the questions begging for answers for us to compete at a high level in the games."

RUBILYN Amit has her eyes set on bigger things. PDI PHOTO

Rubilyn proves she's no ordinary girl

By Marc Anthony Reyes

IN MANY WAYS, RUBILYN Amit is not your ordinary billiards player.

For one, she's an accountant graduate of the University of Santo Tomas, unlike most of the Filipino cue artists who didn't finish school. She also didn't get into the sport through peer pressure unlike most who took up the sport.

And she also happens to be a girl in a man's world.

The 2005 Southeast Asian Games double gold winner was introduced to the game by her own father, Bob, who would take her to the billiards hall with his friends. To keep his then 12-year-old daughter from getting bored, Bob would rent her a table of her own for an hour.

As it turned out, those hour-a-day sessions were all that she really needed.

"I like the feeling when you get the ball to fall into the pocket," said Amit, who started playing against pool hall spotters before eventually taking on the resident hustlers.

A year after first holding a cue stick, she won her first tournament back in their hometown in Mandaue City.

"It was just a Class C event but it felt very good," said the 25-year-old Amit.

Good enough to prod her to chase for more glory in the sport.

The results were even better: She landed a spot in the national team, powering the RP squad to victories in the women's 9-ball and 8-ball gold medals during the 2005 SEAG.

And that's not to mention the countless of other titles that has left her trophy case crammed.

In a rare twist of the regular billiards player's story, it was the sport Rubilyn actually gave up to pursue her education—not the other way around.

She had to quit playing to finish college.

"It was very difficult [to stop playing] because there are a lot of billiards hall around the school," said Amit, referring to the cluster of pool halls in Dapitan and P. Noval streets. "But I was so tired studying all day I didn't find the time to drop by the pool halls."

When she finished her degree in 2002, Amit went full steam ahead with the game she loves and further sharpened her skills.

And then the break she really needed to cash in on her skills: Women's events were introduced in the 2005 SEAG.

"There are many great women players in the world, but I think Filipino women have a place among them," she said.

When that time comes, Rubilyn hopes her presence in title rounds will be an ordinary scene.

NCAA mancom chair: No ineligibility probe

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ESPINAS

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE ATHletic Association yesterday brushed off allegations that one of its schools has been fielding ineligible players.

NCAA management committee (mancom) chair Henry Atayde said the league is not taking any official step toward the incident which he said stemmed from anonymous text messages sent to the members of the mancom two weeks ago.

"We met yesterday and we brought up the topics of those anonymous text messages," Atayde told the INQUIRER. "And we found out that the person behind this went straight to the press."

He said the person responsible for the controversy must be a disgruntled Philippine Christian University athlete judging from the details of information he has.

"Until a formal complaint is lodged and evidence is presented to us, we are not taking any official step on this," said Atayde.

But that doesn't stop him, according to Atayde, from making his own inquiry into the matter. "I am interested in getting into the bottom of this."

Atayde added that he has talked to PCU officials and advised them to "check their own ranks."

Reports alleged that PCU used overaged players in different sports disciplines, including basketball.

The reports even went as far as alleging Gabby Espinas didn't make the NCAA qualification which only allows players who have graduated from high school no more than seven years.

Espinas steered the PCU Dolphins to the championship in 2004 where he was awarded the league MVP. The forward signed up with San Miguel Beer in the PBA this year.

No malice intended in POF swimmer switch, says Pasa

By June Navarro

IDENTICAL IN EVERY ASPECT, BROTHERS Marc and Matthew Paderon of La Union could be mistaken for twins.

So mistaking one for the other is understandable.

The Philippine Amateur Swimming Association (Pasa) yesterday clarified that the player-switching that occurred in the swimming competition of the recent Philippine Olympic Festival in Vigan, Ilocos Sur was unintentional and merely an "honest mistake."

Pasa president Mark Joseph said no malice was found when the older Paderon (Marc) competed in one of the freestyle events of the boys' 8-9 years old bracket instead of his younger sibling Matthew.

"Our technical official is from Manila and does not know the Paderon boys, who can be mistaken for twins," said Joseph, adding that the lane timers are not in a position to deprive any of the brothers the right to participate.

Joseph explained that Marc, being 10 years old, simply obeyed the technical official when he was told to get ready. Joseph, however, said that the coach of the Paderon boys could have been more alert and would be admonished by Pasa.

"We consider the incident an honest mistake. Neither swimmer benefited from this mistake nor was any other swimmer adversely affected," said Joseph.

Meanwhile, POF chair Robert Aventajado said that Ilocos Norte delegation head Michael Keon has apologized after criticizing the entrance fees of the athletes in some of the sports of the POF.

"During his (Keon) time, he encountered no problems on the financial aspect of running an event while we in the POF have been cash-strapped since the beginning," said Aventajado. "It's quite unfair that we get criticized for charging entrance fees that were meant to pay the technical officials who officiated the events."

Peña testing reduced to 'walk'

MELBOURNE—PRACTICE SESSIONS ORIGInally set to start Wednesday for the Formula Three support races in the opening leg of the Formula One Grand Prix here were moved to Thursday, forcing Dado Peña to go through the twists and turns of the Albert Park Circuit on board a road car and on foot.

While walking along the track, Peña, the only Filipino in the 31-man field, took pictures of various turns, trying to get a feel of the 5.303-kilometer track that he will finally get to test early Thursday aboard a Scud Racing/Cooltemp's Dallara F304 car.

Many turns on the street-based circuit are blind corners and drivers need a lot of practice to negotiate them.

"Definitely, it will be tough tomorrow (Thursday), physically," said Peña, 19.

Qualifying races are set early in the afternoon, with Race 1 set a few hours later.

"There are certain portions of the track where you get a chance to overtake," Peña said.

Peña is confident he can keep pace with the rest of the drivers coming from Italy, Austria, Britain, New Zealand, China, Finland, Indonesia, Sweden and Australia.

James Yap's scoring down this season

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

JUST LIKE THE PBA, teams in the collegiate leagues are now starting to recruit imports of all shapes and sizes more aggressively.. When the 2007 UAAP season opens this July for example, the returning De la Salle Green Archers will be parading a 6-foot-6 Eastern European who has established a two-year residency at La Salle Greenhills.

His name is Marko Batricevic and he comes from the former Serbia and Montenegro (Montenegro declared independence on June 3, 2006—ed). Marko, who now considers the Philippines his second home, is a forward who's at his best playing outside.

On the other hand, archrival Ateneo, which under coach Norman Black has embarked on a vigorous recruitment program, will most likely field in an American discovery from Faith Academy named Kirk Long.

***

When Long's name was mentioned during a dinner get-together with some friends, I tried to recall where I first heard about him.

I realized that he was in the list of rising high school stars that was e-mailed to me by Gameface's Henry Abes, who described him as a golden boy with very blonde locks.

***

"Kirk Long looks like he stepped out of the set of a 1960s basketball movie or a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical," Henry wrote.

"But don't let his looks deceive you. The kid can flat out play. With his size and skills (he stands six feet), he won't need to make too much of a transition as a college guard. His biggest adjustment will have to be in the mental and physical toughness department since he has never played against the the kind of roughhouse competition that characterizes Philippine College basketball."

Although he has been practicing with the Blue Eagles, Kirk has yet to formalize his entry by enrolling in the Diliman university.

***

My son Raymond, formerly of the UP Maroons, tells me that imports had been in the UAAP as far back as the '80s. He said he had the chance to play against American Anthony Williams of FEU and Iranian Parvis Fadai of Adamson.

San Beda revived the practice by recruiting Nigerian Sam Ekwe.

Speaking of San Beda, the SBC Boosters Club composed of San Beda alumni was so inspired and touched by the Red Lions' first NCAA championship after 29 years they decided to commission Jude Roque to author a book which chronicles the event. The book is "spiced by looks into the past and glimpses into the future."

The book, which is titled "A Time to Roar," is in full color, which means it is expensive. But proceeds will go to a good cause: The team, specifically preparations for a back-to-back championship.

To those interested in securing a copy, call Jude Roque (091784767990) or Ofrace Ocampo (09209209680), or you can go straight to the office of the SBC Boosters Club at Suite 103, Greenrich Mansion, Pearl Drive corner Lourdes Street, Ortigas Center.

***

Curious if his department had anything to do with James Yap missing out on the national team, PBA head statistician Fidel Mangonong yesterday dug through his files to confirm what he had been suspecting.

"Look at this," Fidel said, after going through the list of last season's scoring leaders, where James was voted MVP.

He was pointing to the number 4 spot where James was when he won the MVP trophy. Scoring leader then was Mark Caguioa, followed by Danny Seigle and Ren-Ren Ritualo.

"Now look at this, In the first conference of the 2007 season, James went down to number 8 in scoring, while Mark stayed on top. Perhaps this is one reason why he is not in the RP team," Fidel said.

***

Text message from colleague Ignacio Dee, a BIG Florencio Campomanes fan: "Campo is back from Turkey and he's okay. You have to see it to believe it. I did not actually see him walking but the other scribes who visited did. He will be confined at the Makati Medical Center until Sunday."

"Campo wants to go to Baguio for therapy. He thinks two months should do it. He still wears a neck brace."

The former Fide president survived a near-fatal vehicular accident while attending a Fide presidential board meeting in Antalya, Turkey, on Feb. 2. He celebrated his 80th birthday in an Antalya hospital where he was confined for weeks.

BOBBY Pacquiao

Soto faces B. Pacquiao June 9 in New York

IN WHAT COULD BE THE biggest break in his boxing career, Bobby Pacquiao hopes to step out of his older brother's shadow when he takes on WBC No. 2 Humberto Soto in a 12-round showdown on June 9 at the Madison Square Garden in New York, USA.

The Soto-Pacquiao showdown will be the chief support to the huge Miguel Cotto-Zab Judah title bout promoted by Bob Arum's Top Rank.

"I think people are going to see a fighter that people recognize as better than either Barrera or Marquez and he'll be fighting at the Madison Square Garden on June 9 against Manny's brother Bobby Pacquiao," Arum told Boxingtalk.

According to a source, Arum had given the younger Pacquiao two choices for his next fight: a bout on April 27 or a mega-showdown with Soto on June 9, which will get him a bigger purse of $150,000—the biggest in his career.

Pacquiao, however, said he had opted to see action on June 9 not only for the bigger money, but also to prove that he belongs in the world's elite fighters with a victory over Soto, who is being described by Arum as 'someone who is better than both Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez.'

Soto, who hails from Tijuana, Mexico holds a fearsome record of 41 wins, 5 losses, 2 draws with 26 KO's, and has been unbeaten since 2002.

Soto earned the right to face the winner of the Barrera-Marquez showdown this Sunday after he beat Ivan Valle in an eliminator last year, although the WBC later said Arum had handpicked the opponent.

Bobby Pacquiao, meanwhile, has already gone back into training and is currently working on his visa for his trip to the United States, following the loss of his passport. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Heat raze Jazz for 7th victory

MIAMI—THE SURGING MIAMI HEAT overcame a 17-point deficit in the second half to beat the Utah Jazz, 88-86, on Tuesday and win their seventh straight game.

The defending NBA champions also won for the 13th consecutive time at home with a 28-12 burst in the final quarter to overpower the Jazz and move within a half-game of first-placed Washington in the Southeast Division.

Antoine Walker keyed the rally with 13 points, all of them in the final 11 minutes of the game, as the heat snapped Utah's six-game winning streak.

Utah coach Jerry Sloan said his team did not respond well in the fourth quarter.

Utah led 74-60 after three quarters, but the Heat shot 12-for-20 in the final quarter with Walker going 6-for-11.

Jason Williams scored 15 points to lead the Heat, while Shaquille O'Neal added 13.

Carlos Boozer had 20 points and 13 rebounds for the Jazz, who have lost seven straight times to the Heat.

The San Antonio Spurs beat the Los Angeles Clippers, 93-84, their 13th straight win.

The Cleveland Cavaliers won their season-high sixth straight game despite the absence of LeBron James with a 124-100 win over the Sacramento Kings. James missed the game with back spasms.

The New Jersey Nets moved into an eighth place tie with the New York Knicks in the Eastern Conference standings with a 112-108 win over the New Orleans Hornets.

Tyrus Thomas scored a career-high 23 points as the Chicago Bulls beat the Boston Celtics, 95-87. *Reuters*

KEVIN Martin (23) of the Kings hits a reverse layup as the Cavaliers' Sasha Pavlovic looks on. REUTERS

Nadal gains round of 8; Sharapova crashes out

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—RAFAEL Nadal stormed into the quarterfinals but it was a bruising day on the hardcourts for the women Tuesday as the top seeds buckled under the California desert heat.

Defending champ Maria Sharapova, three-time Australian Open winner Martina Hingis and 2005 French Open semi-finalist Nadia Petrova all crashed out of the 5.3 million dollar ATP/WTA Pacific Life Open as three of the top four seeds were sent packing.

Two-time defending Roland Garros champ Nadal breezed into the quarterfinals by overpowering compatriot Juan Carlos Ferrero 6-1, 6-1.

The lefthanded Spaniard and World No. 2 needed just over one hour to dismantle Ferrero, who is a former world number one.

Sharapova fell to Russian compatriot Vera Zvonareva, two days after three-time men's defending champion Roger Federer went down in his first match to lucky loser Guillermo Canas.

Petrova pulled out of her match in the second set with French 13th seed Tatiana Golovin because of heat exhaustion.

Croatian Ivan Ljubicic was one service break away from retiring with a knee injury in his fourth round match before rallying to beat David Nalbandian 2-6, 6-4, 6-2.

But it wasn't all bad news for the women seeds as Russian second seed Svetlana Kuznetsova rolled over Japan's Ai Sugiyama 6-2, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinals.

Nadal avenged a loss to Ferrero at the Cincinnati Masters Series 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/3) last year.

The 22-year-old Zvonareva moves into the quarterfinals for the second time in four years and top seed Sharapova loses her world number one tag to Belgium's Justin Henin.

"A loss is a loss, it is always disappointing," said Sharapova, of the 4-6, 7-5, 6-1 defeat. "I am not making any excuses. There is no use in that. It is one of those days where it didn't happen." Daniela Hantuchova upset third seed Hingis 6-4, 6-3 and moves to the quarterfinals where she will square off against Israel's Shahar Peer. *AFP*

SPORTSWATCH

Bardon ready for OPBF challenge

CEBU CITY—JOJO BARDON OF THE REX 'WAKEE' SALUD STABLE WILL depart for Japan today confident that when he goes back home the OPBF flyweight belt is already strapped on his waist. The 27-year-old Bardon will take on undefeated Japanese Masaharu Naganawa in a 12-round bout for the vacant OPBF 112-lb title on March 18 at the International Conference Hall in Nagoya, Japan. Bardon will be accompanied by trainer Juanito Ablaca and Filipino boxing judge Sev Necesario. Salud, remained non-committal to the trip as he has been invited to watch the Gerry Penalosa-Daniel Ponce De Leon bout this weekend. Salud stressed that he is having a hard time choosing which event to attend, saying that although Penalosa's fight is far bigger, Bardon is his boxer and should be given moral support. Ablaca said Bardon has prepared long and hard against the undefeated Japanese by sparring against tough boxers at the Wakee Salud Gym. Naganawa is unbeaten in 11 fights with 2 knockout wins, which indicate that he may not be a solid puncher and may opt to outpoint Bardon. Bardon, who holds the Philippine flyweight title, parades a record of 16-10-1, 8 KO's. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Iligan/NCFP chessfest starts March 30

THE ILIGAN/NCFP OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 30–April 3 at St. Michaels College Gym, Bgy. San Manuel in Iligan City. A joint project of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP), headed by senatorial candidate Prospero A. Pichay Jr and the Iligan City government headed by Mayor Lawrence Cruz, the tournament offers a total cash prize of P220,000 with the champion receiving P 75,000 The top 5 placers will likewise receive trophies. Registration is still open. Contact Iligan City sports director Freddie Siao (063) 223-7763, 0920-9620500 Willie Abalos 0920-4871453, NCFP office (536-8507) or e-mail NCFPsecretariat@yahoo.com.

Palawan Open lures Paragua

GRANDMASTER MARK PARAGUA AND INTERNATIONAL MASTER OLIVER Dimakiling have confirmed their participation in the Palawan Open Chess Championship. A project of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) and the Palawan Provincial Government, headed by Gov. Joel T. Reyes and Provincial Administrator & NCFP vice-president lawyer Romeo Seratubias, the event will be held on March 19-23 at the Provincial Capitol Building, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. The champion gets P50,000 plus trophy. Registration is still going on. For inquiries, contact tournament director Roger Seratubias 0927-9111651, Willie Abalos 0920-4871453 or the NCFP office 536-8507 or e-mail NCFPsecretariat@yahoo.com

LPC Summer Bigtime derby Saturday

TOPNOTCH COCKFIGHTING SHIFTS TO THE LAS PIÑAS COLISEUM ON SATURday via the Summer Bigtime 5-cock derby, a one-day spectacle with P1 million at stake. Ricky Valencia of Scorpio entry, a member of the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) will host the event and will be supported by Mayor Nene Aguilar and Gerry Ramos. Entries must be submitted on Friday from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries: 873-1040 and 874-3910 or 0926-7450375 (Julius). With more than 100 fights lined up, the event will start at 4 p.m. Meanwhile, LPC's Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan fires off at noon today with some 75 fights on tap. The fastest win champion (to be declared after every ten fights) will get P15,000. Likewise, the overall fastest win champion will bring home a six cu. ft. refrigirator; slowest champion, DVD player and second slowest champion, 21" color TV.

Makati 5- cocker stakes P1 million

NO LESS THAN P1 MILLION IN GUARANTEED PRIZE WILL GO TO THE CHAMpions of the upcoming Swing Meycauayan 5-cock derby on March 19 at Makati Coliseum. Hosts Mayor Eddie Alarilla and Tony Tan will be supported by members of leading cockers groups like PCAP, NCA, LGBA, SJC Cockers Club and Bulacan Cockers Gruop. Entry fee is P33, 000. Official entries, with weight limits of 1.8 kg to 2.4 kg must be submitted on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Meanwhile, Willie Villarica (WRV Goldline) and Gov. Ito Ynares (Binangonan) shared the championship of last week's Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-cock derby. The next PCAP derby unfurls on March 26. For details, contact 896-3545 and 895-6475.

QC CAGEFEST: Quezon City Majority Floor Leader Councilor Ariel Inton (center) opens the Inter Restaurant Basketball Leaque at the Bernardo Park in Timog-Morato, Quezon Avenue.

City of Baguio, Pasga I bets top Corporate Cup

BAGUIO CITY—THE PHILIPPINE ASEAN SEniors Golf Association (PASGA) I came through with a final round 146 points on Friday to pocket the seniors' championship title over ASAGA I of Indonesia in the 19th Philippine Corporate Cup.

Together with its opening 149, PASGA I combined for a two-day total 295 points to beat the Indonesians' 288 in the division which was limited to players who are 55 years old and above.

Wigberto "Iggy" Clavecilla Jr. paced PASGA I with a one-under 55 points via the modified Stableford scoring on opening day then blasted Camp John Hay Golf Club's up-and-down, 5,001-yard, par-69 Jack Nicklaus designcourse with a four-under 58 for 113 that also netted him the individual tiara in the same division.

The 59-year-old Clavecilla's teammates also churned out big games in the three-day Corporate Cup organized by tournament chair Jeric Hechanova. Jun Bellicena scored 95 points (50-45) while Andy Co (44-39) and Pablo Soon (40-43) posted identical 83s.

ASAGA I, whose players are members of a victorious squad that won the national seniors championship in Indonesia, was only staring at a slim three-point deficit before the finale, could only muster 142 points and settled for a runner-up finish.

Agoes Soelewah carded an even par 54 points followed by Yudho Mardikusno's 45 and Lukman Hadikusmo's 43 for that 142 tally.

City of Baguio scored 303 on rounds of 158 and 145 to rule the Group I division. Goody Ignacio accounted for 106 points (57-49) while Rudy Lockey contributed 103 (51-52). Other scorers for Baguio were Romy Tio 94 (50-44) and Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan 90 (48-42).

Toyota-Iloilo meets Pagadian Explorers

ILOILO CITY—ACTION SHIFTS to the south when the returning Toyota-Iloilo Warriors host the Pagadian Explorers at 6 p.m. today in the National basketball Conference at the University of San Agustin gym here.

Pagadian is fresh from a come-from-behind 78-75 squeaker over Quezon Villa Anita in Tagaytay City last Monday.

The Warriors, who took a leave of absence in the previous conference, are raring to meet the Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co in the lone match of the tourney.

The backcourt troika of Edua Allado, Elben Leonida and Tonyboy Expinosa spearhead the Warriors' campaign together with reed-thin slotman and ex-West Negros College standout Ruel Balgos.

"We're confident coming into this game," said Iloilo coach Jerry Jaranilla. "We've prepared hard for this and hopefully, our hard work will bear fruit."

The Warriors and the Explorers last met in the first conference last year.

Owned by the Iloilo Basketball League and businessman Robert Uy, the Warriors finished with a 3-8 record in the south but went on to become the lowest ranked team to make the semifinals where they lost to the Explorers in three games.

"Iloilo is a dangerous opponent," said Pagadian playing coach Peter Naron. "It boasts a solid backcourt and a lot of shooters.'

Naron is expected to bank on Melvin Mamaclay, who averaged 18 points and 6.5 rebounds in Pagadian's first two games, Maui Huelar and Mike Orquillas.

Veteran Nelson Asaytono might also suit up for Pagadian after missing two games due to a recurring knee injury.

Meanwhile, the NBC Game of the Week will be aired on Basketball TV at 6:30 p.m. today.

CHAMPS: Adidas King and Queen of the Road Jujet de Asis (2nd from right) and Maricel Maquilan show their trophies after topping the 10K foot race last Sunday . They are joined by (from right) Adidas sports marketing manager Goody Custodio, managing director Joey Singian, Andie Nine and SleekRick.

Bellevue Cup up March 26

THE 3RD ANNUAL BELLEVUE Cup Invitational fires off on March 26 at the Ayala Greenfield Golf & Leisure Club in Calamba, Laguna.

The tournament toasts Bellevue's top accounts and supporters. More than 140 players from top corporations are expected to participate in this by-invitation-only tournament which will have society columnist and avid golfer Johnny Litton as tournament director.

"We are as excited as the players to finally hit the greens once again and celebrate Bellevue's many successes," said Ryan Chan, Bellevue's director for marketing and communications. "As the Bellevue Cup tradition dictates, we are pulling out all the stops to make this tournament one to remember."

The awards cocktails will be held at The Bellevue Grand Ballroom. A fashion show of select jewelry pieces by top jewelry maker Hoseki will also be a highlight of the evening. For inquiries, call Bellevue at 771-8181.

Larry's Cup charity golf blasts off today

THE SECOND EDITION OF THE Larry's Cup charity golf tournament comes off the wraps today at the East and West courses of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City.

About 90 four-man teams or about 376 participants are expected to join, higher than the 250 who saw action in the initial Larry's Cup which was established last year to provide assistance to chosen beneficiaries through a series of annual tournaments.

"It (Larry's Cup) has opened doors to opportunities by lending a hand to our less fortunate brothers and sisters," said tournament chair Mark Mendoza. "A lot of people have taken notice of this worthy undertaking and have, in fact, requested us to offer more slots so they could do their share as well."

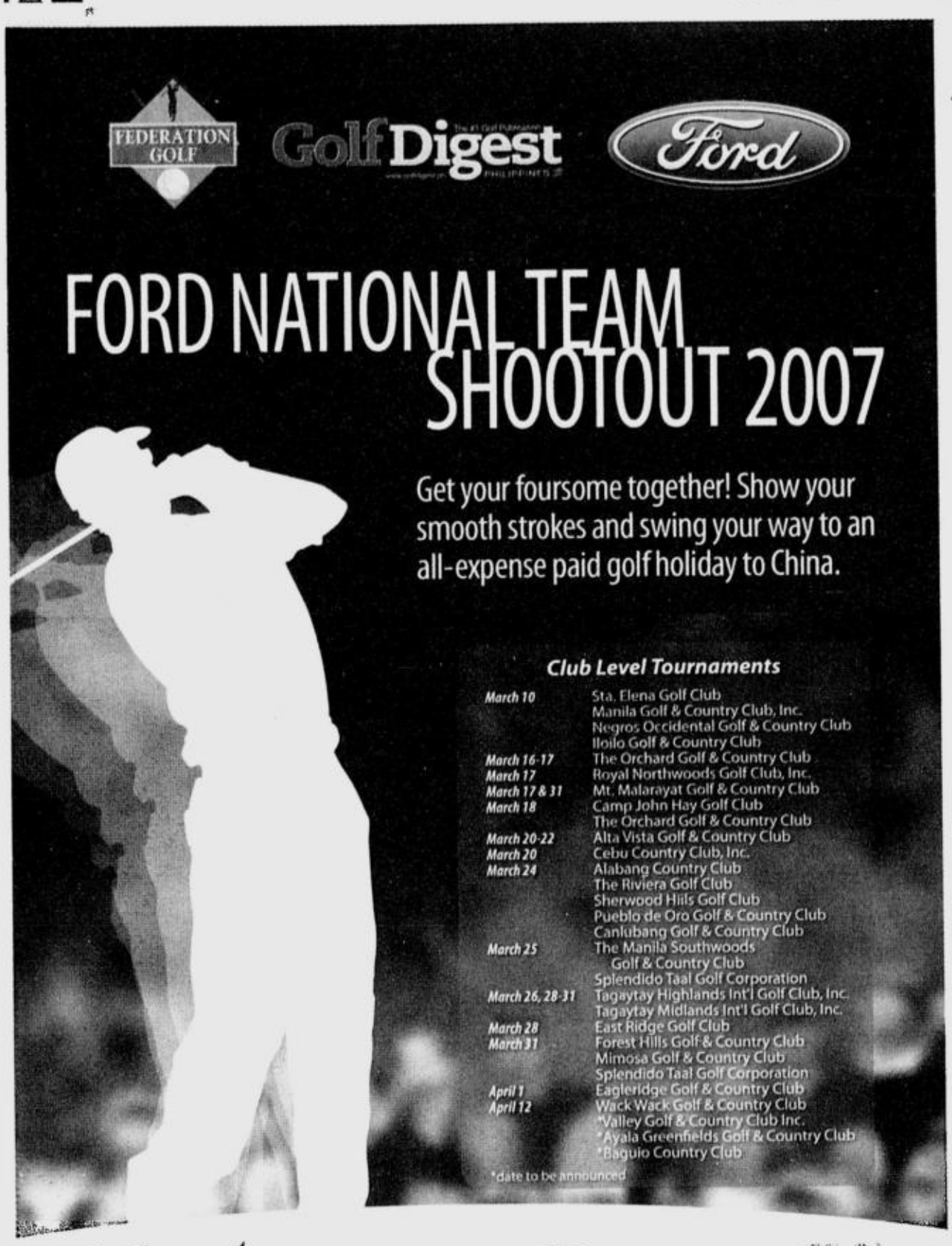
The two-day event, Mendoza said, will have the Ramendo Livelihood and Educational Foundation Inc. as beneficiary.

The field will be then divided into five groupings. There will be Class A (0 to 9 handicap), Class B (10-18), Class C (19-26) and Class D (27 and up) for the men's division and another class for the ladies.

Each player will have to submit his/her February handicap index certified by either by IPI, NGAP or mother club.

The basis for individual scoring will be under the Stableford format where a net bogey is worth a point, a net par is two points, a net birdie is three points, a net eagle is four points, a net double eagle is five points and a net hole-in-one is six points.

But the focus will still be in the team competition where a champion plus two runners-up will be determined. Each team will be allowed to field in a maximum of four players per round with the three best scores added up for its total for the day.



Alcano, Orcollo seek 1-2 finish

Bata, Django also join Japan Open

DOUBLE WORLD CHAMPION Ronnie Alcano and Philippine money game king Dennis Orcollo aim to sustain their 1-2 finish in the recent 2007 World 8-Ball Championship as they compete in the 2007 Annual Japan Open on March 17-18 in Tokyo, Japan.

They'll be pitted against fellow Filipinos Antonio Lining, the defending champion, Hall of Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Romy Vicente, Eduardo Saracho and 2006 All Japan championship winner Lee Van Corteza and other world-caliber cue masters.

ALCANO

Alcano bested World Pool League titlist Orcollo, 11-8, in the finals to clinch the World 8-ball crown in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, late Thursday.

With his victory in Fujairah, the 34-year-old Alcano duplicated the feat of Wu Chia-ching of Chinese Taipei who became world champion in 8-ball and 9-ball in 2005.

Apart from his $25,000 (P1.2 million) purse, Alcano was amply rewarded with a brand new Toyota Innova and an endorsement deal with San Miguel Corporation on Monday.

Like Alcano and Wu, the 52-year-old Reyes was also a double world champion having ruled the World 9-ball in 1999 and the inaugural World 8-ball event in 2004.

"I hope to bounce back in the Japan Open," said Orcollo, who like Alcano is being managed by Perry Mariano of Bugsy Promotion. "Luck was not on my side in the finals. My empty break at the start was crucial because it allowed Alcano to move ahead at 7-2."

"We are confident that our players will continue their domination in the Japan Open," said Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines president Ernesto "Ernie" Fajardo.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Shell karting starts March 24

TOUGHER AND MORE EXPLOSIVE action unfolds as the 2007 season of the Shell Helix Superkarting Series kicks off March 24-25 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in Bangkal, Cavite.

After the exciting climax of the 2006 season, expect the rivalry between Karter of the Year Matteo Guidicelli and Asian Karting champ Marlon Stockinger to turn more intense this year.

Also expected to shine this season are Daniel Cleak, Mark Bumgarner, Indy Villalon of Birel-Motorsports, Jean Stefano Marcelo of Marcelo Racing, Marty Aguilar of Bosch-Intelco and Alessandra Madrigal of Alessandra Racing.

They'll be facing other karters moving up in the Formula Open 125 and the Rotax Max Seniors class. Likewise, young upcoming karters led by reigning Junior Karter of the Year Paco Rodriguez, Javi Benitez of Jet Racing, VJ Suba, Juha Turalba, Franco Reyes, Joey Orduña, Fil-Japanese Eugene Okuda and Renz Pazcoguin are also set to strut their stuff in the junior divisions.

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PCGG moves to recover PLDT dividends

P35B in earnings to go to Treasury

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE GOVERNMENT IS BENT ON RECOVERING SOME P35.1 BILlion in dividends accumulated by the Marcos and Cojuangco groups from shares in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. that have been declared as ill-gotten, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Ermita said the recovery of the dividends from the PLDT shares was a priority after the government sold the sequestered shares of Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. to Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd. for P25.2 billion last Feb. 28.

"We have to recover that because it will go to the Treasury," Ermita told reporters.

Ermita said he discussed the recovery of the PLDT dividends last week with PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio.

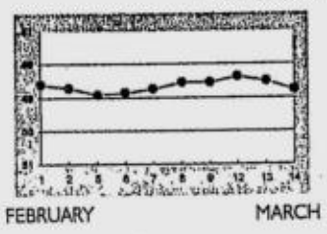
"Sabio told me last week that he had assigned somebody to file the necessary action so that they can ask the PLDT to account for those billions because that has to go to our Treasury," Ermita said.

Ermita, however, said Sabio gave no timetable for the recovery of the dividends, but he added he would ask the PCGG chair to

PCGG/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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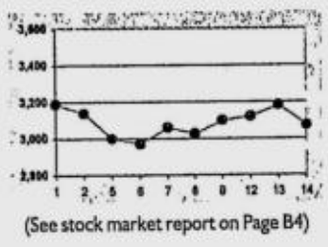
As of 5 p.m., March 14, 2007

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close 3.38% lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 3.38 percent lower yesterday as jitters on Wall Street, where stocks tumbled overnight due to financial troubles at sub-prime mortgage lenders, spilled over onto Asian

SHARES/ B2

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The latest Buzz in Business : The "BOSS" partners with the "BIZ"

Shares close . . .

From page B1

markets, dealers said.

Weak US retail sales figures added to the negative tone in US stocks as investors fretted that problems in the housing market could spread to the broader economy, by dampening consumer spending, a key driver of growth.

The latest downturn follows the turmoil on global equity markets earlier this month sparked by heavy losses in Chinese stocks and raised concerns that that correction still has further to go overall.

The composite index lost 107.68 points to 3,074.28, giving up most of the gains it made in the three previous sessions. It traded between 3,063.81 and 3,181.96.

The broader all-share index fell 60 points to 1,985.77.

There were 110 decliners and 14 advancers, with 27 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 5.2 billion shares worth P4.3 billion.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average shed more than 240 points Tuesday in its second-biggest drop in almost four years on news that lenders New Century Financial Corp., Accredited Home Lenders Holding Co. and General Motors Acceptance Corp.'s residential unit were facing financial problems on their sub-prime mortgage business.

"Stocks tumbled in knee-jerk reaction to the slump on Wall Street but our losses today were not in the same magnitude as the recent sell-off following the sharp correction in China," said Gomer Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index dived 263.84 points or nearly 8 percent on Feb. 28 when the rest of the world took their cue from the sell-down in China and Wall Street sparked by worries about the US and Chinese economies.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell P65 to P2,335. *AFP*

Corrupt me if I'm wrong

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

QUE HORROR!

What is this I hear that Ayala Land just scaled down the unit size in the second tower of its condo project called Greenbelt Residences?

Apparently, the country's biggest real estate company just gave a signal to other property companies on a major shift in its business strategy.

And that may have a bearing in the property boom that everybody says is building up fast in this country that was just voted the "most corrupt" in Asia.

Known for high-end prestige-spiked projects, Ayala Land in effect just made the unit price at Greenbelt Residences a little more affordable.

Don't get me wrong: The "Ayala" name still commands "bragging rights" (i.e. higher price for the same piece of real estate).

For instance, the company priced the Greenbelt Residences at P100,000 per square meter, or about the same as the price for its "Serendra" condo project at the Fort.

In comparison, the Forbeswood Heights condo of Megaworld—at the same former military base Fort Bonifacio—sells for only P70,000 per square meter.

Thus, the scaled-down-size strategy of Ayala Land only has something to do with what the biggest chunk of the market is willing to buy.

Meaning, a piece of property priced at P5 million at the most.

* * *

OKAY, CORRECT me if I'm wrong, but the report by Hong Kong's PERC (Political and Economic Risk Consultancy) about us as the "most corrupt" in Asia, is most unfair.

As PERC itself said, it is the "perception" among expats here, and they, as far as I know, are mostly never outside the office.

But how does this cute administration's Team Unity respond to the report? Well, it said that it is a "flawed" perception.

To correct it, the Palace called on the Sandiganbayan to resolve all pending corruption cases, including the plunder trial of former President Joseph Estrada.

Me, I only think it will take us until the next life to rid this country of corruption.

Still, I take heart in numerous reports about the dismissal of BIR and BOC personnel for unexplained wealth.

Those offices are where most of the most damaging kind of corruption takes place.

And if it's true what the expats say that ours is the most corrupt hereabouts, who does the corrupting, anyway? Expats are among them, if I'm not mistaken.

* * *

IT SEEMS that Andrew Tan, founder of the aggressive property company Megaworld, who just consolidated his interests in fast food, liquor-making, and real estate into a holding company, is still on a roll.

Word goes around that he just bought the much-coveted piece of real estate called "Shell Maya" on Gil Puyat Avenue in Makati.

Everybody wanted that piece of land, which is now surrounded by high-end buildings such as the RCBC hi-tech tower, but which is underutilized as a gas station.

It used to be owned by the Ayala group, which transferred the lot to Fil-Estate Land as payment, which in turn sold it to Andrew Tan.

Now the question is, how different will this upcoming project of Andrew Tan be, say, from the dozens of other buildings rising up in Makati today.

* * *

RUMORS also are going around in that hub of big business (which is, for the sake of Sen. Lito Lapid, Makati) about trouble in local politics that can be bad for business.

Well, all kinds of permits for construction in Makati must pass through city hall—the office of the mayor, in particular.

For one, this cute administration's candidate for mayor of Makati is Lapid, who is said to be still vacationing abroad even at this time.

Also, we just confirmed that a lawyer named Abigail Binay was admitted recently to the Makati Med for "physical trauma." It seems that the young lady received some hard blows in her face and body.

But what caused the trauma, nobody in Makati Med—and certainly none at the police headquarters and the city hall—could say for sure.

She happens to be the daughter of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, who is said to be preparing her to become the next congressperson of the second district of Makati.

Our sources said that Abigail was admitted to the Makati Med at about 1 a.m. last Monday.

The day before, on a Sunday, she was just seen at a fiesta (cum political rally) at Barangay Comembo, apparently campaigning for the congressional seat.

Now, up against Abigail Binay is a certain Erwin Genuino, a student at the UP College of Law who happens to be the son of Pagcor chair Efraim Genuino, a staunch supporter of this cute administration of Gloriaetta.

Reports also reached us that, in the evening after the rally, the Binay father and daughter had a spat right in front of people at the city hall.

And all of a sudden, Abigail was in the hospital. Tell you what, not a few in the Makati business crowd are worried.

* * *

ENGLISH, or the return of English as our second language, which is today's international business language, is one top priority of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

Boss, we just came across an illustrated book on the Greek mythology "The Trojan Horse" (published by Tahanan Books) in both English and Filipino.

So? Well, this one is different. The first half of the book has the English edition, and the last half is the flipped upside-down version in Filipino.

According to Tahanan publisher Reni Roxas, bilingual books here always had the two languages on the same page.

Unfortunately, the reader tends to focus on the more familiar language, which is of course Filipino.

Thus, in the Tahanan renovation to the flipbook format, each language stands alone on the page, resulting in less distraction for the reader.

In this way, according to Roxas, the youngsters should learn English or Filipino faster than the usual method.

For the sake of Jesli, Tahanan's phone number is 813-7165.

PCGG . . .

From page B1

make a progress report on their recovery efforts.

The government is seeking the recovery of the dividends after the Supreme Court issued a final ruling last August declaring the 111,415 shares of stock of PTIC, held by Prime Holdings Inc., belonged to the government. These shares were equivalent to 46 percent of PTIC's outstanding capital stock.

PTIC holds a 14-percent stake in PLDT. The 46-percent holding of the government in PTIC is equivalent to a 6.4 stake in PLDT.

Singapore's Parallax Venture Fund submitted the highest bid of P2,100 a share for the PTIC-held PLDT shares at a public auction last December. However, First Pacific had the right to match the bid because it has a majority stake in PITC.

First Pacific already owned 54 percent of PTIC and was the biggest shareholder in PLDT with a 24-percent stake. By buying the government's 46 percent stake, First Pacific will fully own PTIC and get an additional 6.4 percent stake in PLDT.

The government auctioned the PTIC shares in November after the Supreme Court awarded them to the state as part of a long-running legal battle to recover wealth illegally amassed by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

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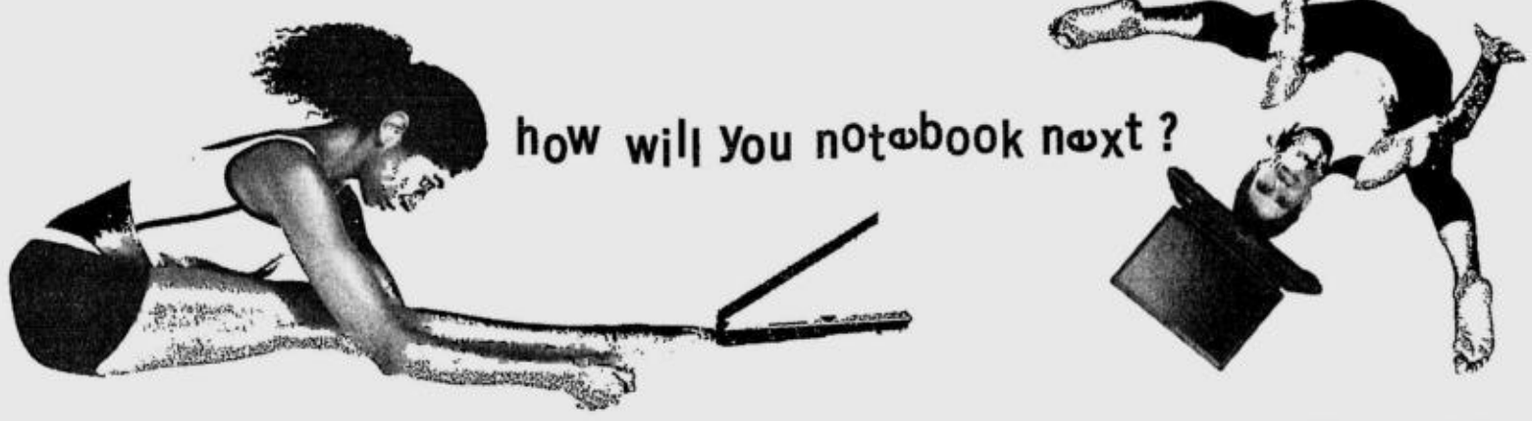

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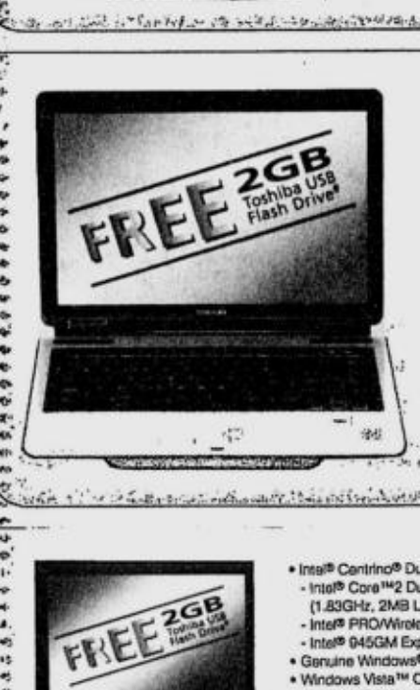

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Peso tumbles to 48.75 to $1 after Wall St. slump

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERday tumbled to 48.75 from Tuesday's 48.50 to a dollar, one of the worst hit among Asian currencies, after an overnight selldown on US equities in Wall Street sent shockwaves across regional financial markets.

Fears over rising mortgage loan delinquencies in the world's biggest economy again caused risk aversion among investors, thus causing a shakeout in equities as well as emerging market bonds.

In the Philippines, the bloodbath in the US also caused a 3.4-percent decline in the main-share stock exchange composite index and caused a selldown on the peso and the government's foreign currency-denominated bonds or ROPs.

At the Philippine Dealing System, downward pressures on the peso were tempered by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' unloading of dollars, which capped the day's low at 48.75:$1, currency traders said.

The peso hit as high as 48.66 before closing at the day's low of 48.75 against the greenback. Volume traded amounted to $535.89 million.

The local currency has thus trimmed its gains since the start of the year to 28 centavos, after ending at 49.03:$1 in 2006.

"If not for the BSP's intervention, the peso would have easily slid back to 49:$1," a currency trader at a big local bank said.

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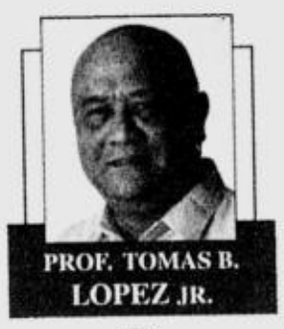
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Alliance Tuna sales, income up

By Daxim L. Lucas

PUBLICLY LISTED ALLIANCE TUNA International Inc. reported a sharp rise in its 2006 sales levels due to strong demand for its canned tuna products from overseas markets.

In a statement, the company said its net sales last year hit $31.1 million—or P1.6 billion at the prevailing exchange rate—representing a growth of almost 43 percent.

"The strong sales growth was due to the upsurge of orders from all its major markets, [including] new markets it established last year, and the expansion of its product lines," the company said.

Alliance Tuna's gross profit margin for last year stood at 12 percent, which it said was a good showing for firm operating in a "commoditized global industry."

Gross profits amounted to $3.7 million, or about P189.3 million in 2006.

The firm is a Thai-Filipino joint venture which produces and markets canned tuna. It has one of the largest processing facilities in the country, which package tuna for other brands.

"Improved cost controls and the entry into new markets that paid better prices helped in

Demand for tuna products rising

improving the core profitability of the company," it added.

More importantly, the firm said that its net income rose by 80 percent in 2006 to $2 million, or P102.8 million, compared to $1.1 million in the previous year as a result of the strict cost control regime.

Net profit margin for 2006 stood at 6.4 percent, which is also better than the previous year's level of 5.2 percent.

"The company's performance in 2006 was the result of our market expansion program and continuous improvements [on] the factory floor," Alliance Tuna CEO Jonathan Dee said.

"We are now selling to more than 40 countries worldwide, double the number of countries we sold to when we started two years ago," he added.

He added that the firm has been proactive in searching for new markets, which has led to higher sales.

"We have taken part in exhibitions in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Eastern Europe which have helped us expand our marketing reach," he said, adding that the firm's cost control methods have also raised its margins and overall profitability.

Dee said that the firm's three-year goal which it set when it started in 2004 was achieved last year "with plenty [of room] to spare."

The Alliance Tuna chief said that the proceeds from the firm's initial public offering in November of last year "had an immediate impact" on its operations and profitability.

"The full-year impact of these additional funds should be fully presented in 2007," he added.

Recently, the firm said that it plans to borrow up to $3 million from banks to fund its operations.

Alliance Tuna said it would take out a $1-million credit line from the Manila branch of Bangkok Bank. Another $2 million would be sourced from the Philippine Veterans Bank, which would, in turn, be covered by an export guarantee from the Philippine Export Import Bank.

Eastwood City BPOs post $189M in 'exports'

BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING FIRMS located in Megaworld Corp.'s Eastwood City information technology "ecozone" registered $188.575 million in export earnings for 2006.

According to Megaworld, the data was compiled by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) based on its records of Eastwood City's PEZA-accredited firms.

"Thus, the export earnings figure for all of Eastwood City's 62 locators—37 of which are information technology (IT) firms and 25 are non-IT—is significantly higher," the company said.

"At the current exchange rate, the country's first IT ecozone generated approximately P9 billion in export earnings last year," Megaworld's first vice president Jericho Go said in a statement.

"From call centers to human resource systems, from animation to semiconductors design, most of our IT locators generated an increase in revenues," Go said.

"We also welcomed this month of March a new Fortune 500 locator, Dell," he added.

The official also made a pitch for the firm's 50-hectare McKinley Hill township project in Fort Bonifacio.

"Our first BPO building there, One World Square, is now being finished and will be operational in May," he said. "And we just broke ground on the next tower, Two World Square. This is in response to the tremendous demand for office space in an excellent location such as McKinley Hill."

Go added that the ongoing boom in the BPO industry will mean more dollar earnings for the country, with the continued construction of third-generation BPO buildings.

According to the firm, the BPO buildings at McKinley Hill are "a key and vital component" [of] the project.

"Residents of McKinley Hill's villages and condominiums will experience a better quality of life where everything is within reach within minutes," it said. "They can work or start a business at the BPO buildings and upcoming commercial center. The clubhouses and condominiums host play amenities. In the next few months, McKinley Hill will also host the Chinese and Korean International Schools and world-class hotel management institution Enderun Colleges."

"On the national economic level, the BPO aspect of McKinley Hill will further boost export earnings from BPOs," Go said. "On the local level, it will create wealth for executives and business owners, and a better life for the firms' employees. The projected big number of employees will also create a ripple effect on the business prospects of restaurants and shopping centers in McKinley Hill and the nearby areas." *Daxim L. Lucas*

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Circular No. 561
Series of 2007

SUBJECT: AMENDMENTS TO CIRCULAR NOS. 1327 AND 1389 DATED 30 JANUARY 1992 AND 13 APRIL 1993, RESPECTIVELY

Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 230 dated 22 February 2007, approving certain reforms to liberalize foreign exchange rules and regulations, the following provisions of Circular Nos. 1327 and 1389 dated 30 January 1992 and 13 April 1993, respectively, as amended, are hereby further amended, as follows:

Section 1. Item 2 of Circular No.1327, as amended, shall now read as follows:

"2. Allowable open FX position - Banks' allowable open FX position (either overbought or oversold) shall be the lower of 20 percent (20%) of their unimpaired capital or US$50 million.

For purposes of this section, unimpaired capital of foreign banks that are universal banks shall be defined as permanently assigned capital plus the Net Due To Head Office account; Provided that the amount of Net Due To Head Office that may be added to the permanently assigned capital shall not exceed the equivalent of six (6) times the permanently assigned capital. For foreign banks that are commercial banks, unimpaired capital shall be defined as permanently assigned capital plus the Net Due To Head Office account; Provided that the amount of Net Due To Head Office that may be added to the permanently assigned capital shall not exceed the equivalent of eight (8) times the permanently assigned capital.

Any excess beyond the allowable limit shall be settled on a daily basis.

Penalties on excess overbought and oversold positions of banks when PDS trading is suspended shall be waived."

Section 2. The following sections of Circular No. 1389, as amended, are hereby further amended, as follows:

1. Section 2 shall now read as follows:

"Section 2. Sales of Foreign Exchange by AABs, NBBSEs and Forex Corporations for Non-Trade Transactions. AABs, Non-Bank Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas-Supervised Entities (NBBSEs), and their subsidiary/affiliate forex corporations may sell foreign exchange to residents to cover payments to foreign beneficiaries for non-trade current account purposes (e.g., educational expenses, medical expenses, travel expenses and salaries of foreign expatriates) without need for prior Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas approval, subject to the following documentary requirements and guidelines;

a. For sales not exceeding US$10,000

- Application to purchase foreign exchange using the prescribed format;

b. For sales exceeding US$10,000

- Application to purchase foreign exchange using the prescribed format and supported by documents specified under existing rules.

For sale of foreign exchange, **regardless of amount,** for payment of non-trade obligations that are foreign currency loan- or foreign investment-related, the documents prescribed under existing rules shall apply.

NBBSEs, including Forex Corporations, **shall not** sell foreign exchange to:

a. Non-residents; and

b. Residents for –

1) Investment purposes (whether domestic or abroad) including capital repatriation and remittance of profits and dividends thereon;

2) Payment of foreign exchange obligations to residents other than AABs;

3) Payment of unregistered foreign currency loans/ obligations to non-resident financial institutions. However, outstanding unregistered loans/obligations as of 27 October 2000 may continue to be serviced by forex corporations.

4) Payment of FCDU loans not eligible to be serviced with foreign exchange purchased from the banking system. However, FCDU loans outstanding as of 27 October 2000 may continue to be serviced by forex corporations.

AABs shall not sell foreign exchange to residents for payment of foreign exchange obligations to residents other than AABs.

2. Section 44 shall now read as follows:

"Section 44. Outward Investments by Philippine Residents.

A resident may invest provided that:

1. the investments are funded by withdrawals from FCDUs; or
2. the funds to be invested are not among those required to be sold to AABs for pesos; or
3. the funds to be invested are sourced from AABs but in amounts not exceeding US$12 million per investor per year.

An application to purchase foreign exchange for outward investments, whether or not prior Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas approval is required, shall be accompanied by the documents specified under existing rules.

For purposes of this section, investments in foreign currency denominated bonds/notes of the Republic of the Philippines (ROP) or other Philippine entities are considered outward investments.

Outward investments by residents (excluding BSP-supervised entities) funded with foreign exchange purchased from AABs in amounts exceeding US$12 million per investor per year shall require prior approval and registration by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Existing rules on outward investments of BSP-supervised entities shall continue to apply.

Foreign exchange acquired or received by residents as dividends/earnings or divestment proceeds from outward investments funded by foreign exchange purchased from AABs shall be inwardly-remitted within 15 banking days from date of receipt and sold for pesos thru AABs within three (3) banking days from receipt in the Philippines."

Section 3. Repealing Clause. All provisions of existing BSP issuances that are inconsistent herewith are deemed modified accordingly.

Notwithstanding the liberalization of foreign exchange rules and regulations, banks are reminded to adopt and adhere to sound policies in undertaking their foreign exchange transactions.

This Circular shall take effect on 2 April 2007.

For the Monetary Board:

(*Sgd.*) **AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.**
Governor

8 March 2007

Philex sold P723M in gold, copper

PUBLICLY LISTED Philex Mining Corp. sold P723 million worth of gold and copper in a single shipment this month as it continued to take advantage of strong precious metals prices on the world market.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Philex chair and CEO Walter W. Brown said the amount came from the sale of 5,025 dry metric tons of copper concentrates to L.D. Metals.

The news of the latest shipment comes after it announced a sharp improvement in its earnings for 2006 due mainly to the high metal prices.

The mining firm said its net profit for last year hit P3.086 billion, up from just P409.1 million in 2005.

The year-on-year performance represents a 654-percent increase in the company's bottom line.

On top of the high prices of gold, silver and copper, Philex was also helped by increased output.

In its statement to the exchange, Philex said that its board of directors also approved a cash dividend of P0.10 per share, the record and payment dates of which have yet to be announced.

Earlier, the company also said its board had also approved the extension of its Padcal mining operations from 2011 to 2014. *Daxim L. Lucas*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 14, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.5	38,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	56.5	57	55	56.5	1,754,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	63.5	65	63.5	64.5	2,294,500
China Banking Corp.	870	875	870	870	7,920
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2,580,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	103	103	102	102	2,180
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59.5	59.5	58	58	2,749,500
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	49	50	49	50	2,700
Philippine National Bank	48	48	47	47.5	15,600
Phil. Savings Bank	57	63	57	62	1,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	34	35	34	34.5	153,000
Security Bank Corp.	76	76	74.5	75	635,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	58	58	58	58	220,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	328,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	6	6	6	6	8,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1600	1600	1600	1600	590
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.84	2.06	1.84	2.06	98,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	680	690	670	680	6,390
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2100	2100	2100	1,530
Ivantage Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1,154,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.8	39,377,000
First Gen Corp.	51.5	53	51	53	960,800
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	69.5	71	69.5	70.5	410,000
Manila Electric Co. A	70	71	69	69.5	301,300
Manila Electric Co. B	71	71	69.5	70	1,689,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	5,064,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4	6,747,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.32	880,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.55	109,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	84,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	52.5	52.5	51.5	51.5	144,400
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	21	21	21	21	1,800
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	199,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	500,000
San Miguel Corp. A	61.5	61.5	61.5	61.5	20,600
San Miguel Corp. B	70	70	69.5	69.5	119,900
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.18	2.38	2.12	2.34	15,648,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.5	556,300
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.7	1.74	1.64	1.64	28,163,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.45	1,393,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.2	8.5	8.2	8.5	1,576,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	28,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.8	4.85	4.8	4.85	675,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	29,090,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	184,200,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	22,000,000
Ayala Corp.	565	570	550	565	39,870
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	7.9	8	7.8	7.9	17,251,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.9	6.5	5.6	6.3	5,296,000
AJO.Net Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.0725	0.065	0.0675	98,700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	875,000
APC Group Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.33	6,040,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.46	3,848,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	12,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.7	4.9	4.7	4.8	473,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	9.8	9.8	87,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.25	3.4	3.1	3.25	52,079,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.7	6.8	2,680,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5	4.9	5	489,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	75,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.5	1,654,700
Medco Holdings	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	90,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	7.5	8	7.4	7.5	1,237,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.6	1.6	739,000
Pacifica	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	14,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	2,580,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	28,310,000
SM Investments Corp.	367.5	367.5	350	360	97,420
South China Resources Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.06	1.08	391,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16.25	16.25	15.5	15.75	7,643,300
Belle Corp.	1.28	1.32	1.28	1.28	4,908,000
A. Brown Co. Inc.	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.22	1,151,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2	2	1.9	2	210,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.48	1,780,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	236,000
C&P Homes Inc.	2.6	2.75	2.46	2.55	3,108,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	150,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.75	0.77	0.75	0.75	27,090,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	300,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.07	0.07	0.065	0.065	1,200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.6	1.62	1.58	1.62	21,329,000
Gotesco Land, Inc.	0.23	0.26	0.23	0.26	230,000
Gotesco Land, Inc.B	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	310,000
Interport Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	93,900,000
Interport Res. B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	2,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	3,520,000
City & Land Developers	3	3	3	3	21,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.81	0.84	0.81	0.82	3,210,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	100,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.95	3	2.85	2.95	36,704,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	1,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.73	0.88	0.7	0.84	38,020,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	40,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.25	19.25	18.25	18.25	907,600
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.61	1,770,000
SM Development Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	333,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11	11.25	11	11.25	6,283,900
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.69	1,220,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.15	0.135	0.15	11,920,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	70,300
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	7,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.64	1.68	9,740,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1345	1345	1320	1335	6,230
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.7	3,228,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2330	2345	2310	2335	726,290
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.235	0.27	0.235	0.26	23,730,000
Ionics Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	50,000
IPVG Corp.	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.4	892,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	19,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.68	260,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	10,000
Philweb Corp.	0.046	0.046	0.044	0.045	502,900,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals, Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.15	4.2	225,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	29.5	30	29.5	29.5	868,700
Keppel Phils. Marine, Inc.	1.08	1.16	1.08	1.16	197,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.1	3.25	3,135,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.36	0.36	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.91	0.91	40,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	810	810	810	810	180
Ipeople Inc.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.25	727,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.55	2.65	2.55	2.55	830,000
Paxys Inc.	26	27	26	26	608,600
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.2	5.2	4.95	4.95	776,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.2	5.2	5	5.2	467,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	248,400,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.2	9.6	9	9.6	16,707,000
Benguet Corp. A	11	11	11	11	17,500
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	51,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.28	1.34	1.22	1.3	35,967,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.27	31,080,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	10,930,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.027	200,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	411,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	2,611,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.15	4.15	4.05	4.1	8,845,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	19	19.75	19	19.5	1,003,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.7	0.71	0.69	0.69	1,970,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.16	1.2	1.14	1.14	5,767,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.33	0.4	0.33	0.39	30,270,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	66,700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	38,500,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	33,100,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9	9.2	9	9.2	38,000

CURRENCIES

March 14, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.757748	1.000000	48.4510
Japan	Yen	0.006518	0.008602	0.4168
United Kingdom	Pound	1.462226	1.929700	93.4959
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096968	0.127969	6.2002
Switzerland	Franc	0.622380	0.821355	39.7955
Canada	Dollar	0.645441	0.851789	41.2700
Singapore	Dollar	0.495908	0.654450	31.7088
Australia	Dollar	0.596746	0.787526	38.1564
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.010048	2.652661	128.5241
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202147	0.266773	12.9254
Brunei	Dollar	0.494291	0.652316	31.6054
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000109	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023102	0.030488	1.4772
UAE	Dirham	0.206375	0.272353	13.1958
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.319700	63.9408
Korea	Won	0.000802	0.001059	0.0513
China	Yuan**	0.097862	0.129149	6.2574
Argentina	Peso	0.244238	0.322321	15.6168
Brazil	Real	0.362559	0.478469	23.1823
Denmark	Kroner	0.134217	0.177126	8.5819
India	Rupee	0.017190	0.022686	1.0992
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216129	0.285225	13.8194
Mexico	New Peso	0.067674	0.089310	4.3272
New Zealand	Dollar	0.528231	0.697107	33.7755
Norway	Kroner	0.123271	0.162681	7.8821
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012477	0.016466	0.7978
South Africa	Rand	0.102655	0.135474	6.5639
Sweden	Kroner	0.107753	0.142201	6.8898
Syria	Pound	0.014597	0.019264	0.9334
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022982	0.030329	1.4695
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000353	0.000466	0.0226

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 13, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 13, 2007

Grand Boulevard, Waterfront feud heats up

Hotel bars Gatchalian, associates from entering premises

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PANLILIO FAMILY-OWNED Grand Boulevard Hotel has accused Chinese-Filipino businessman William Gatchalian of spreading rumors about an impending buyout which, it claims, has affected its business.

In a letter to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Grand Boulevard corporate secretary and legal counsel Dennis Manicad said the company's business "is being bothered by persistent rumors that Grand Boulevard had been bought by Waterfront Properties Inc."

Waterfront is a PSE-listed firm controlled and owned by Gatchalian. Grand Boulevard Hotel, on the other hand, is owned by publicly listed Boulevard Properties of the Panlilio family.

"Gatchalian and his gaming associate Kim Wong were heard announcing that their group is recruiting staff for Grand Boulevard Hotel," Manicad said in his letter to PSE president Francis Lim. "Our officers and employees became worried about their jobs especially after calls to them from Mr. Wong and Mr. Gatchalian's offices."

"The rumors are false and we believe they come from Wellex Group, Waterfront Properties, William Gatchalian and his cohorts," the letter said. "They may be disseminating this information as part of their supposed debt-laden 'buying spree' of hotels and resorts in an attempt to improve their stock at the PSE."

"We do not wish to be involved in any stock price manipulation or moral turpitude-related actuations that end up fooling the travel industry or the investing public," Manicad told the PSE.

The hotel's official said they initially tried to brush off these rumors and reports, which were circulating through the travel and trade industries, as well as queries from members of the media.

"They persist still and are now affecting our business," he said.

Due to the reported damage caused by the rumors, the hotel said Gatchalian and Wong have been banned from entering its premises.

Recently, Waterfront spent an estimated P30 million to improve a newly leased boutique hotel in Manila and announced plans to open five similar hotels in other cities, aiming for the high-end market.

Last year, Waterfront signed a contract to lease and manage the 50-room, 800-sq.m. G Hotel Manila, owned and designed by architect Gerry Contreras. The hotel is only a stone's throw from Grand Boulevard Hotel.

Waterfront may open five more G hotels in the cities of Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Iloilo and Bacolod.

Waterfront said a 50-room G Hotel could generate revenues of P10 million a month, while future hotels could have as many as 150 rooms.

G Hotel Manila will be under the corporate management group of Waterfront Hotels and Casinos.

Waterfront operates the Manila Pavilion Hotel and Casino, Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino, Waterfront Airport Hotel and Casino, Mactan and Waterfront Insular Hotel Davao. It has a total of 1,550 rooms, 1,560 employees and over 41,300 square meters of convention and gaming space. It also houses the country's biggest gaming facilities.

First Gen seen bidding for more Napocor gencos

By Abigail L. Ho

INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCER First Gen Corp. remains interested in National Power Corp.'s generation assets that the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. will be placing on the auction block, including one in the Visayas and a retired plant in Metro Manila.

First Gen vice chair and chief executive Peter Garrucho Jr. said the company saw the Napocor privatization as a "now and only now" opportunity that they had to grab.

"Once these (assets) are sold, it will take a long time for something like this to happen again. So we have to look at the assets that are particularly interesting for us," he said.

He said First Gen had always been keen on bidding for Napocor's hydro and geothermal power plants, plus a select number of coal-fired power plants.

In fact, the power firm had already bagged three of the assets that PSALM has so far sold: the 1.6-MW Agusan hydropower plant and the 112-MW Pantabangan-Masiway hydropower plant package.

Garrucho said First Gen would like to participate in the bidding for the Ambuklao-Binga package and the Angat facility.

Also of interest were the Palinpinon and Tiwi-Makban geothermal facilities, he said.

"And because we have aspirations on gas, gas not just for power but for other uses, we also want to look at Sucat, but I think the government has to make up its mind on what it wants to do with Sucat," he said.

PSALM vice president for asset management and electricity trading Froilan Tampinco had earlier said that the government agency has yet to decide on whether or not to place the decommissioned 850-MW Sucat thermal power plant on the auction block.

This was because the plant could serve as a "fallback" in case no new capacity is put up in the Luzon grid prior to the projected 2010 critical period.

He said the retired power plant could be repowered if ever there would be a supply shortage in the next few years.

"We're still making it a fallback in case of supply tightness and if there's no additional supply coming in. There should be a decision on what to do to with Sucat within the year," he said.

First Gen also recently revived its interest in the 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired power plant after categorically saying that it would never again bid for the plant.

First Gen senior vice president Ricardo Tantoco explained the company's change of heart, saying conditions then were different from conditions now.

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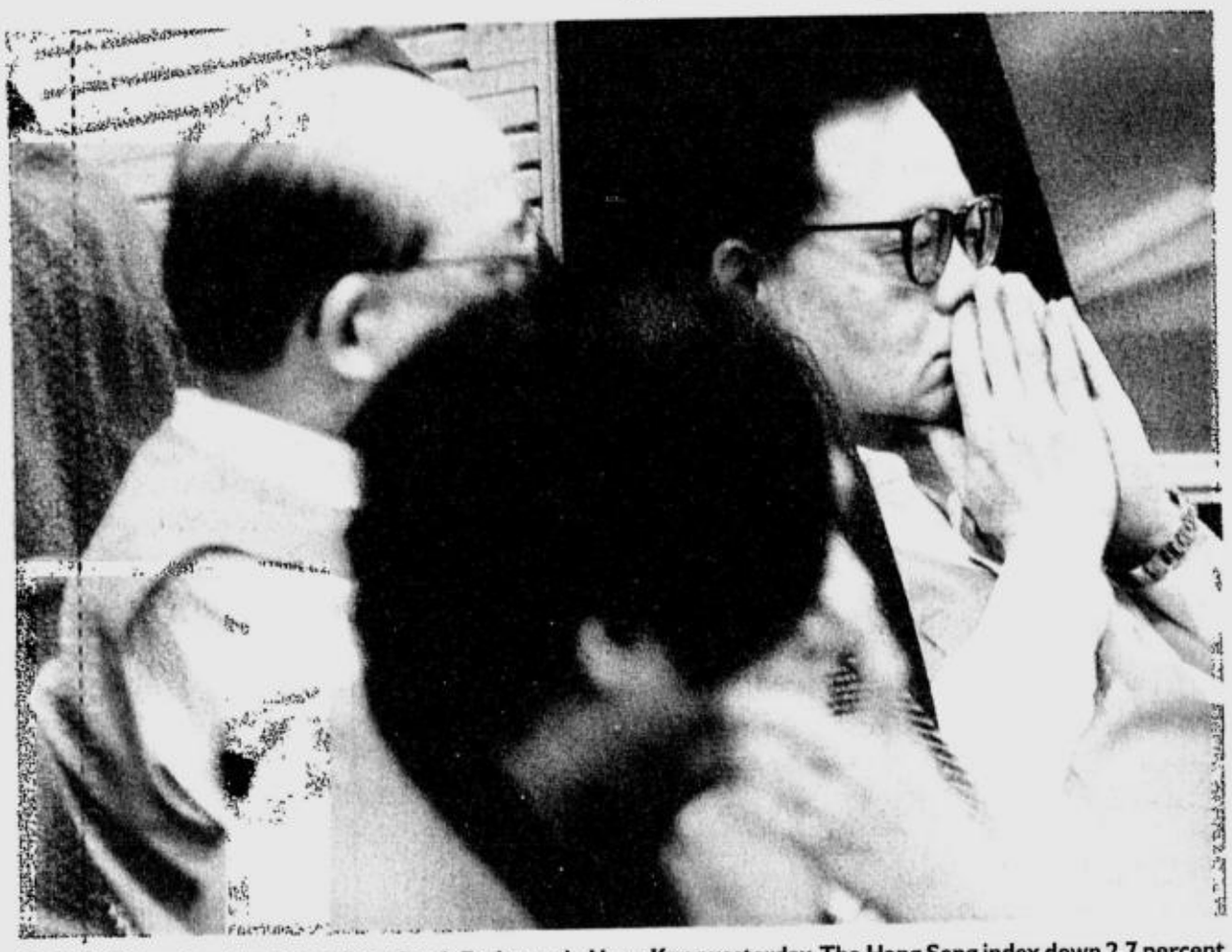
Asian stocks plunge after Wall Street sell-off



A TRADER reacts at the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in Hong Kong yesterday. The Hang Seng index down 2.7 percent at 18820.22 mid-day amid regional weakness after Wall Street fall. Other markets in Asia also fell in reaction to the Wall Street drop. AP

US market drop 2nd biggest in 4 years

TOKYO—ASIAN STOCKS PLUNGED Wednesday after Wall Street chalked its second-biggest drop in four years and rattled already nervous markets worldwide.

The tumble extended a couple weeks of international trading turmoil rooted in concerns about overheated global markets and slower growth in the American economy, a major export market for Asian companies.

Concern about US sub-prime lenders and lackluster retail sales pushed the Dow Jones industrials down 1.97 percent overnight, sparking sell-offs across Asia.

Stocks in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, China and Malaysia were all down more than 2 percent, while Indian and Philippines stocks tumbled more than 3 percent.

At the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the region's biggest bourse, the benchmark Nikkei 225 index sank 506 points, or 2.95 percent, to 16,673 points. Foreign investors who bought up stocks during the recent rally led the selling, traders said.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index fell 2.6 percent, Indian stocks opened 3.2 percent lower, while Philippine stocks plunged 3.4 percent.

Overnight, the Dow fell 242.66, or 1.97 percent, to 12,075.96 amid concerns about US sub-prime lenders, who provide mortgages to people with poor credit.

The US Commerce Department also said sales at retailers rose a less-than-expected 0.1 percent in February, suggesting consumer spending might be waning.

While Asian markets are sensitive to signals of a slowdown in the US economy, analysts said the economic fundamentals of the Asian region remain strong.

The recent declines in stock prices were more likely a correction to cool markets that had risen too far too fast over recent months.

"The sell-off is in sympathy with the sharp sell-off we saw overnight on Wall Street, and it highlights the continued nervousness out there," said David Cohen, chief of Asian economic forecasting at Action Economics in Singapore.

While the US retail sales data and mortgage news that prompted the sell-off on Wall Street "are a little concerning," fundamentals such as strong US jobs data released Friday were still supportive of global equities.

"The world economy seems to be remaining on an upward trajectory," Cohen said.

The slump reversed a modest recovery in global markets from even bigger losses that started late last month with a sharp sell-off in Chinese stocks Feb. 27, which contributed to a 416-point drop in the Dow later that day.

The Shanghai Composite index was down 1.85 percent Wednesday.

In India, jittery investors sold their holdings in almost every bluechip stock, dragging the 30-share Sensex—the benchmark stock index of the Bombay Stock Exchange —down by 403 points, or 3.2 percent, to 12,580 in the first 30 minutes of trading. AP

Oil prices hover around $58/barrel as traders await US fuel stocks data

SINGAPORE—OIL PRICES EDGED higher in Asian trading Wednesday ahead of US government oil inventories data expected to show declines in some fuel stocks.

"The crude oil futures market has rebounded above $58 as traders focus on the expectation that this week's US inventory report will show declines in products inventories, both gasoline and distillates," said Victor Shum of Purvin & Gertz in Singapore.

Light, sweet crude for April delivery gained 3 cents to $57.96 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange midmorning in Singapore.

The contract dipped by almost a dollar on Tuesday to settle at $57.93 a barrel following a decline in Wall Street which stirred worries about the US economy and demand for energy.

The oil futures market is experiencing a short-term recovery, said Tetsu Emori, chief commodities strategist with Mitsui Bussan Futures in Tokyo. But market participants are taking the sidelines ahead of the US fuel stocks data, he said.

Market analysts expect gasoline inventories to fall by 2.1 million barrels when the US Energy Information Administration reports data for the week ended March 9 later Wednesday, according to a Dow Jones Newswires poll. Crude oil inventories are expected to rise by 1.4 million barrels, while distillate stocks are expected to fall by 1.9 million barrels due to last week's cold weather.

A monthly report released Tuesday by the International Energy Agency has also buoyed prices, Shum said. The report warned that oil stocks in industrialized countries were falling at an usually high rate so far this year and could be the biggest first-quarter decline in crude oil inventories in 10 years.

Shum said the IEA report helped support prices against the impact of falling Asian stock markets Wednesday.

Japanese stocks fell nearly 3 percent during Wednesday morning trade, falling in the wake of an overnight plunge on Wall Street.

A meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries set for Thursday appeared to have minimal sway on prices because of expectations that oil ministers would opt to keep output steady.

In other Nymex trading, heating oil futures rose 1.28 cents to $1.7030 while natural gas prices added 9 cents to $6.982 per 1,000 cubic feet. AP

Viacom sues Google's YouTube for alleged copyright violation

NEW YORK—BIG MEDIA TOOK ITS FIRST big swing at YouTube Tuesday as Viacom Inc., the owner of MTV, VH1, Comedy Central and other cable networks filed a $1 billion (760 million euros) copyright lawsuit against the video-sharing site and corporate owner Google Inc.

The lawsuit marks a sharp escalation of long-simmering tensions between Viacom and YouTube and represents the biggest confrontation to date between a major media company and the hugely popular site, which Google bought in November for $1.76 billion (1.33 billion euros).

Last month, Viacom demanded that YouTube remove more than 100,000 unauthorized clips from its site, and since that time the company has uncovered more than 50,000 additional unauthorized clips, Viacom spokesman Jeremy Zweig said.

A quick search of YouTube's site Tuesday turned up numerous clips from Viacom programs including segments from Comedy Central's "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" and Nickelodeon's "SpongeBob SquarePants" cartoon.

In the lawsuit, filed in US District Court in New York, Viacom says YouTube "harnessed technology to willfully infringe copyrights on a huge scale" and had "brazen disregard" of intellectual property laws.

YouTube's soaring popularity has been a cause of fascination but also fear among the owners of traditional media outlets, who worry that YouTube's displaying of user-uploaded clips from their programs—without compensation—will lure away viewers and ad dollars from cable and broadcast TV.

Viacom is especially at risk because many of its shows are aimed at younger audiences who also are heavy Internet users. At the same time, Viacom is trying to find other, legal ways to distribute its shows digitally, such as by selling episodes of "The Daily Show" and "South Park" for $1.99 (1.51 euros) each through Apple Inc.'s iTunes service. Those shows can then be viewed on a computer or video iPod.

YouTube says it cooperates with all copyright holders and removes programming as soon as it is notified. But Viacom argues that approach lets YouTube avoid taking the initiative to curtail copyright infringement, instead shifting the burden and costs of monitoring the site onto copyright holders.

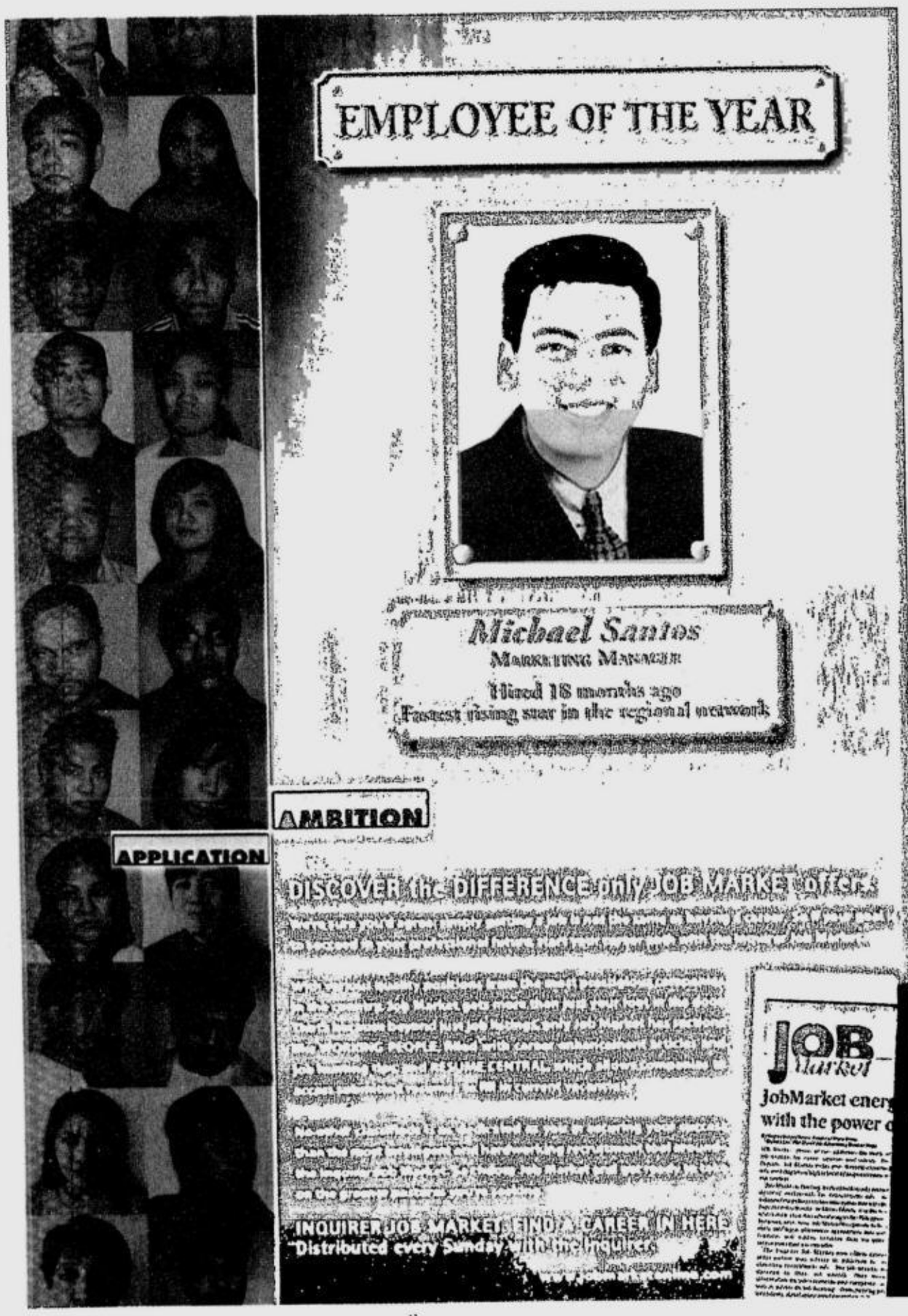
Alexander Macgillivray, associate general counsel for products and intellectual property at Google, said YouTube was protected under the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which gives online service providers protection from copyright lawsuits so long as they comply with requests to remove unauthorized material.

"We're saying that the DMCA protects what we're doing," Macgillivray said in an interview. On the other hand, he said, "The DMCA is silent on what we have to do if we don't get a notice" to remove material.

Other media companies have also clashed with YouTube but some, including CBS Corp., have agreed to provide some clips to the site. CBS Corp. used to be part of Viacom but has since split off into a separate company.

Universal Music Group, a unit of France's Vivendi SA, had threatened to sue YouTube, saying it was a hub for pirated music videos, but later reached a licensing deal with them.

Despite those arrangements, media's relations with YouTube remain testy. CBS' CEO Leslie Moonves told investors last week that its pact with YouTube had provided a big promotional boost for its shows. AP



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Firm turns to coalbed methane to fuel power plant

Natural gas may be tapped from existing mines

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL FIRM MG MINING AND ENERGY Corp., through affiliate Sultan Energy Philippines Corp., hopes to tap coalbed methane in its coal mines in Mindanao to fuel a 100-megawatt (MW) power plant.

In a recent interview, Sultan Energy president and MG Mining vice chair Rufino Bomasang said he was confident that 100 billion cubic feet of coalbed methane, which could be derived from various coal mines all over the country, may be found in the existing coal operating contracts (COCs) of MG Mining.

"I believe the largest potential for coalbed methane is within our COCs," Bomasang told reporters. "I think the reserves are about 100 billion cubic feet, enough to power a 100-MW power plant for 20 years."

Asked to give an estimate on how much the company would have to invest to extract the coalbed methane and use it to fuel a generation plant, he said further studies and computations would still have to be made.

For the power plant alone, however, using the industry benchmark of $1 million for every megawatt of power, he said that would need an investment of at least $100 million.

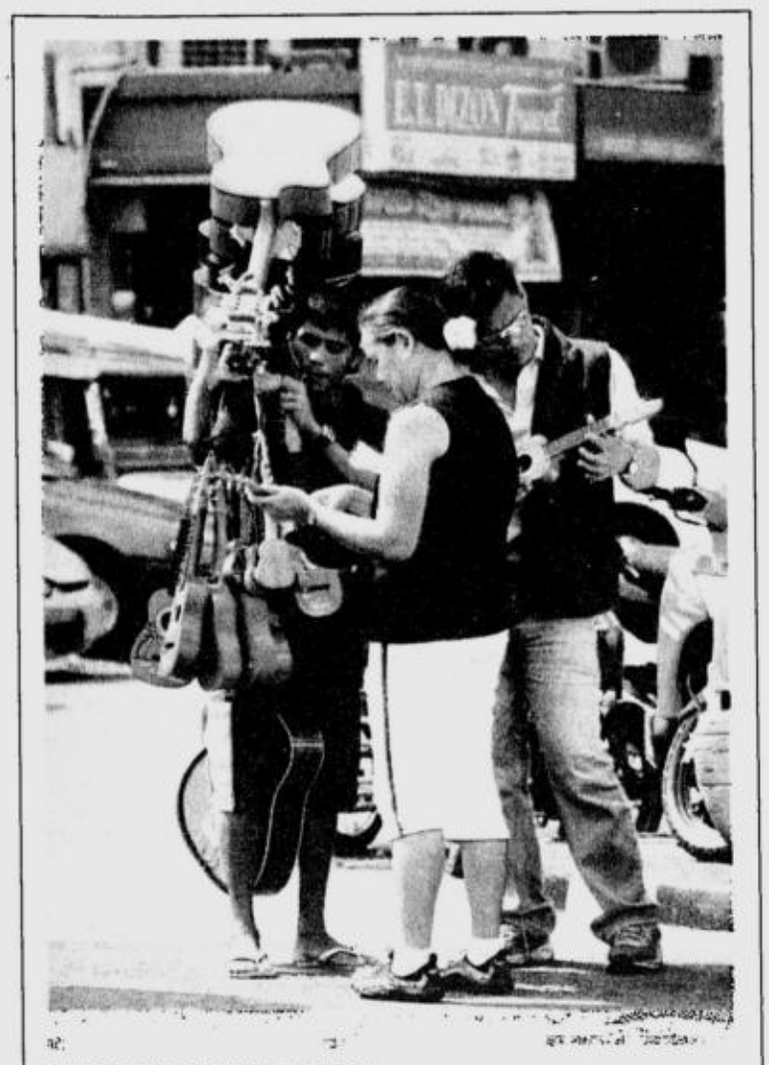
"We'll be transforming methane from a liability into an asset," he said.

The United States and Philippine governments have signed an agreement that would allow the country to make full use of 16.4 billion cubic meters of coalbed methane potential.

Under the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Energy and the US Geological Survey of the United States Department of Interior, the two countries would assess the potential coalbed methane and related coal resources in the Philippines.

Coalbed methane refers to the natural gas found in coalbeds. It has a variety of uses, one of which is power generation.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the study would allow contractors to turn something lethal to coal miners into something useful.



IT'S THE GUITAR MAN
A man selling small guitars persuades a couple to part with their precious pesos along Roxas Boulevard. Hawkers appear to be doing brisk business along the busy streets of Metro Manila, selling anything from fishing rods and mobile phone chargers to toys. REM ZAMORA

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
Makati City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS
March 29, 2007

To The Stockholders:

Pursuant to Article IV of the Amended By-Laws of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of BPI will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel InterContinental, Makati City, Metro Manila, on March 29, 2007, Thursday at 9:00 A.M., for the transaction of the following business:

1. Calling of Meeting to Order.
2. Certification of Notice.
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders on April 6, 2006.
5. Reading of Annual Report and approval of the Bank's Statement of Condition as of December 31, 2006 incorporated in the Annual Report.
6. Approval and Confirmation of all Acts during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and all other Board and Management Committees and Officers of BPI.
7. Election of 15 Members of the Board of Directors.
8. Election of External Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration.
9. Directors' Bonus.
10. Other Matters.

In accordance with Article XII of the said By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Book of BPI will be closed from February 27, 2007 to March 29, 2007. Only Stockholders of record as of February 27, 2007 will be entitled to notice and to vote at the said meeting.

If it will be inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent you thereat by means of a proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of BPI, 19th Floor, BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Metro Manila, not later than 5:00 P.M. of March 19, 2007. Validation of proxies shall be held at the same office on March 22, 2007 at 4:00 P.M.

When signing as attorney-in-fact, executor, administrator, guardian, or in any other representative capacity, please give full title and file papers showing your authority.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Sgd.) CARLOS B. AQUINO
Vice-President &
Corporate Secretary

Healthcare protection in RP not sufficient

By Doris C. Dumlao

(Conclusion)

"HOWEVER, WE ALSO KNOW that many of the poor, even with a PhilHealth card, do not even seek care because of the cost of travel, and expectations they may have to make substantial co-payments," the report noted.

The PDF working group noted the need for government commitment and action to address the following issues: enrollment for universal coverage, shifting the financial risk from members to PhilHealth and service providers as well as safeguarding and improving the quality of care need to be addressed simultaneously.

"This requires commitment and action from local government units, PhilHealth as well as DOH," the paper said.

The working group also cited the need to contain the costs of drugs and health service provision.

High costs

"Increased insurance coverage and enhanced insurance benefits won't translate into the desired level of protection for members if they are captured by high costs. Similarly, private health expenditures will not yield their due outcome if prices are too high," the paper said.

Two reasons were cited for such high costs in the Philippines:

- Current health financing mechanisms based on fee-for-service reimbursements encourage price escalation of health service provision. In particular, the way benefits are currently designed under PhilHealth allows hospitals to simply increase their prices when benefits are raised.

Hence, there's lack of a mechanism to control the cost of services including professional fees renders any expansion in benefits ineffective in decreasing out of pocket expenses; and,

- Drug prices in the Philippines are among the highest in the region (at the minimum 3-4 times higher than the international price index scale.

Control prices of drugs

"This issue is particularly critical in the many cases where drugs are lacking at public hospitals, because the poor are forced to purchase drugs from private pharmacies at higher cost and without the possibility of reimbursement," the paper said.

As such, the paper urged effective mechanisms to control and reduce the prices of drugs and service provision.

Rising incidence of HIV

Recommended measures are: a change of provider payment modalities of PhilHealth for health services (away from fee-for-service), increased use of quality generic drugs, continuous price and quality monitoring (Drug Price Reference Index, quality control), taking up opportunities for pooled procurement (hospital pharmacies and LGUs), promoting rational prescribing and price regulation of prescribed drugs.

The task force also called the PDF's attention to the rising incidence of HIV infection in Philippines.

Compared to the average of 16 HIV cases per month in the last five years (2001-2005), the AIDS Registry had shown a monthly average of 27 new cases in 2006. As early as May 2006 the total HIV cases have already exceeded that of 2005.

The majority of HIV cases hit Filipino adults during their peak years of economic productivity (58 percent were aged 25-39 years old).

All modes of transmission have already been reported, but sexual transmission means remains to be the most common (87 percent).

"Because AIDS is a behavior-driven disease and behavior takes time to change, and because the incubation period of HIV infection could take as long as 10 to 15 years, the impact of all actions or non-actions taken today will be felt after a decade or so. The message therefore is clear: act now or pay later," the report said.

Bird flu

The task force also sought the establishment of appropriate compensation and surveillance systems against the Avian influenza or bird flu.

"The Philippines is still free from Avian influenza that affects over 50 countries in the world today," the report said.

"However, the threat is still very high considering the globalization of trade and industry, transportation and communications.

"As the Philippines has one of the highest proportion of its GDP (gross domestic product) attributed to the poultry industry, any outbreak of Avian influenza would have dramatic economic repercussions."

Lenovo recommends Windows Vista™ Home Premium.

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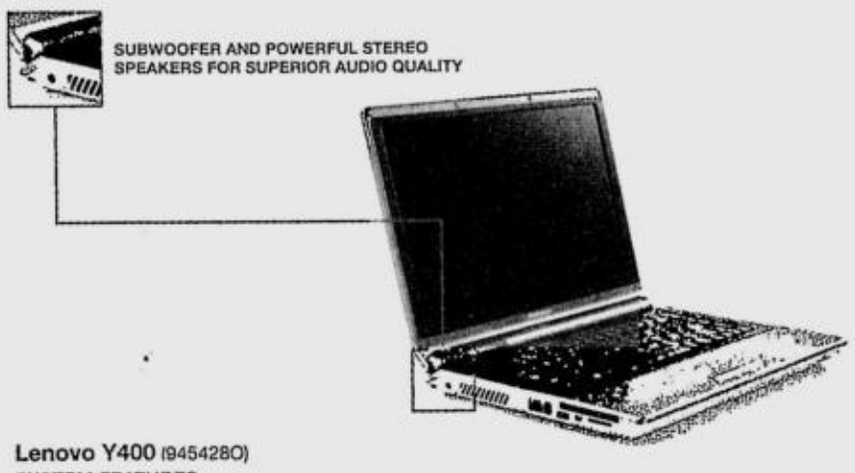

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills
Quezon City
Tel. No. 931-8101

The **Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services: Kapangyarihan at Kaunlaran sa mga Barangay (KALAHI-CIDSS: KKB)**, the flagship poverty alleviation project of the Republic of the Philippines implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), is looking for **Senior and Junior Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers** to join the project's Regional Project Management Offices (Regions CAR, 4-B, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and Caraga)

Scope of the Job:

The RM&E Officer is in charge of monitoring and evaluating the Project's progress and performance at the regional level, which includes data collection and storage, survey work and analytical sessions undertaken at the regional level, and undertaking researches and special studies set forth in the Project's Research Agenda. S/he is also in charge of monitoring the installation and functionality of the Project's Grievance Redress System at the regional level, ensuring quick response to questions and expediting the resolution of grievances.

Terms of Reference:

Senior RM&E Officer

1. Ensure implementation of M&E system at the regional and field levels
2. Be responsible for the review and analysis of reports from the field levels, preparation of regular and on-demand reports
3. Undertake special studies and researches in accordance with the Project's Research Agenda
4. Facilitate the resolution of grievances and conduct content analysis of grievances
5. Provide coaching and technical assistance on M&E to Regional Project Management and Area Coordination Teams
6. Facilitate and coordinate M&E activities at the regional level

Junior RM&E Officer

1. Assist the Senior RM&E Officer in the preparation of reports, studies and other reportorial requirements
2. Manage the data collected from the field, which includes data consolidation and intake and monitoring of resolutions of grievances
3. Provide coaching and technical assistance on M&E to Area Coordination Teams
4. Facilitate and coordinate M&E activities at the regional level
5. Ensure the compliance of the ACTs to the reportorial requirements

Qualification Standards:

Senior RM&E Officer

1. A degree in a relevant field
2. At least 3 years experience in Monitoring and Evaluation work, or 3 years combined experience in M&E and in research
3. Familiarity with rural development, participatory processes and monitoring and evaluation tasks and processes
4. High proficiency in Microsoft Office applications, at least in Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Ability to perform complex tasks using Excel formulas and tools.
5. Willingness to work in an assigned regional office, undertake field work and interact with different stakeholders
6. Demonstrated analytical report writing skills (samples to be submitted)
7. Good oral and written communication skills
8. Can work under pressure and with minimal supervision
9. Ability to motivate, train, direct and coordinate with other staff
10. Proficiency in the use of statistical software is an advantage

Junior RM&E Officer

1. A degree in a relevant field
2. At least 2 years relevant work experience or research experience
3. Familiarity with rural development, participatory processes and monitoring and evaluation tasks and processes
4. High proficiency in Microsoft Office applications, at least in Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Ability to perform complex tasks using Excel formulas and tools.
5. Willingness to work in an assigned regional office, undertake field work and interact with different stakeholders
6. Demonstrated analytical report writing skills (samples to be submitted)
7. Good oral and written communication skills
8. Can work under pressure and with minimal supervision
9. Ability to motivate, train, direct and coordinate with other staff

Interested applicants may send their curriculum vitae and samples of analytical reports written to the KALAHI-CIDSS National Project Management Office, 4th floor DSWD Central Office, Constitution Hills, Batasan Complex, QC., or to email **kc_me_central@yahoo.com**.

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BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/Brief Description	Supply and delivery of 28,500 sets Corrugated Boxes for Currency Notes per BSP specifications
Approved Budget for the Contract	P4,275,000.00
Delivery Period:	Staggered basis, as follows: 2,800 sets - not later than 28 May 2007; 2,800 sets every 2nd week of the month thereafter until order is completed

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project awarded and completed within the last five (5) years (Y2002 to present) with an amount of at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	15-28 March 2007; not later than 1:00 p.m.
2. Pre-Bid Conference	30 March 2007; 3:00 p.m.
3. Opening of Bids	17 April 2007, 2:00 p.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount P2,140.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI--March 15, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

EN BANC

IN THE MATTER OF ACCREDITATION AS CITIZENS' ARM OF THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS IN THE PROVINCES OF MAGUINDANAO SHARIFF KABUNSUAN, LANAO DEL SUR, BASILAN, SULU, TAWI-TAWI AND CITIES OF COTABATO AND ISABELA FOR THE 2007 NATIONAL ELECTIONS AND ANY OTHER ELECTORAL EXERCISE IN THE CALENDAR YEAR 2006-2007 - IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO

SPP NO. 07-014

CITIZENS COALITION FOR ARMM ELECTORAL REFORMS, INC. (CITIZENS CARE),
Petitioner.
x----------x

ORDER

Acting on the verified petition of "CITIZENS COALITION FOR ARMM ELECTORAL REFORMS, INC. (CITIZENS CARE)" filed on February 26, 2007 for accreditation as citizens' arm of the Commission on Elections for 2007, National Elections and any other electoral exercises in the provinces of Maguindanao Shariff Kabunsuan, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Cities of Cotabato and Isabela, pursuant to Section 4, Rule 33 of the Comelec Rules of Procedure, petitioner is hereby ordered to cause the publication of herein petition, together with this order in a newspaper of general circulation at its own expense.

Let this case be set for hearing on **Thursday, 15 March 2007** at **10:00 o'clock in the morning**, at the Session Hall of the Commission, 8th Floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila.

SO ORDERED.

Give this **6th day of March 2007, Manila, Philippines.**

FOR THE COMMISSION:

(Sgd.) **BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.**
Chairman

(PDI--March 15, 2007)

CALBAYOG CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.D. Avelino St., Calbayog City
Western Samar

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Calbayog City Water District through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/dealers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Second-Hand/Slightly Used service vehicle described hereunder:

Name of Contract	Location	Brief Remarks
One (1) UNIT DOUBLE CAB PICK-UP, 2.4-3.0 liter fuel injection Turbocharged diesel engine, four wheel Drive (4x4) 5 speed manual Transmission, Air condition, Power steering, 205-235/65-70 R 15 Tire size with aluminum rim, FM/AM-CD Player, complete with standard toos, spare tire and duplicate key	Province of Samar City of Calbayog	For use in the Calbayog City Water District activities requiring transport

Conditions:

1. The mileage of the offered unit from the time it was originally acquried as a brand new unit must not exceed 60,000 kms.
2. The unit to be offered must have a remaining useful life of Four (4) years. This must be certified by the bidder and to be included during the submission of bids. Note: Remaining useful life refer to the difference between the estimated service life of the subject vehicle and number of years of actual service of the same.
3. Total Bid price should not exceed P790,000 inclusive of taxes.
4. Mode of payment: 50% down, balance payable in 4 monthly equal payments at 0% interest.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount equivalent of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. All particulars relative hereto shall be governed by the pertinent provision of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Interested bidders may obtain further information from CCWD/BAC Section at the address stated above from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, Tel. Nos. (055)-2091183, 209-1843.

The CCWD-BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on March 30, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the CCWD Conference Room, CCWD Administration Building, J.D. Avelino St., Calbayog City, Western Samar.

Bid opening shall be on April 12, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. at the above stated address.

The CCWD-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **EDITHA C. YRIGAN**
BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) **ARNULFO W. BANZON**
General Manager

(PDI–March 15, 2007)

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
PEOPLESUPPORT (PHILIPPINES), INC. PeopleSupport Center, Ayala Avenue cor. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City	Danielle Lee Bramwell	Client Services Manager
WMS.NET.CAFE CORPORATION 17 Verdant St., Villa Cristina, Pamplona 3, Las Piñas City	Christopher Emeka Okorie	General Manager
EUROCOPTER PHILIPPINES, INC. PADC Hangar 2, Manila Domestic Airport, Pasay City	Alain Hamard	President and CEO
CHEMICO PHILIPPINES INC. EMF Bldg., 7424 Santillan St., Makati City	Khwanchiwa Choengnam	Assistant General Manager
GLOBAL STEEL PHILIPPINES (SPV-AMC), INC. Unit 2703, 27/F 88 Corporate Center, Sedeno cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Rajesh Kumar Singh	Head-Cost, Budget & MIS
IDOCS INC. U-2604-05 Union Bank Plaza, Meralco Ave. cor. Onyx and Sapphire Sts., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Dominic Alex Paul Whellams	Director of Operations
GLOBAL STEEL PHILIPPINES (SPV-AMC), INC. Unit 2703, 27/F 88 Corporate Center, Sedeno cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Sangmesh Shivappa Byahatti	Dy. Manager-Cold Mills Maintenance Planning
LINK2SUPPORT, INC. 5/F Techno Plaza One Bldg., Orchard Road, Eastwood City Cyberpark, Libis, Quezon City	Mi Ri Park (wife of Ko)	Korean-PSS (Product Support Specialist)
ABOITIZ ONE DISTRIBUTION INC. G/F Twin Cities Condominium Bldg., 110 Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Colin Stanley Ricardo	Consultant
JIN HUNG BIJOU ART INC. 715-717 Ilaya St., Tondo, Manila	Jong Ho Kim	General Manager
ISPHERE GLOBAL INC. 14/F Rufino Pacific Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jehan Robert Pereira	President and Chief Executive Officer
ISPHERE GLOBAL INC. 14/F Rufino Pacific Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jaiprakash Samuel	Treasurer
R & G CONSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT AND TRADING, INC. 81 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque City	Joung Don Lee	Marketing Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI–March 15, 2007)

Section I. Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Contract for the Supply of One (1) unit Infrared Thermal Imaging Camera and Accessories

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for the CY 2006 intends to apply the sum of **Php 2,400,000.00** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply of One (1) unit Infrared Thermal Imaging Camera and Accessories.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The PEZA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) and certified copy of Phil-GEPS Certificate of Registration from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of Infrared Thermal Imaging Camera and Accessories.
3. Bidders should have completed a single similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC within the last three (3) years and met the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on 02 March 2007 to 16 March 2007.**
5. Interested bidders may submit their LOIs, certified copy of their Phil-GEPS Certificate of Registration and e-FPS enrollment **not later than 16 March 2007** at the address given below and secure the complete set of Bidding Documents therefrom upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Php 2,000.00.**
6. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
7. The PEZA will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference on 03 April 2007 at 2:00 PM** at the address given below.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **2:00 p.m. of 16 April 2007.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in an amount of not less than 1% of the ABC. Late Bids shall not be accepted. **Bid opening shall be on 16 April 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the address given below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above date/s is declared as a non-working holiday it will automatically be rescheduled on the next working day (same time).
10. Completion of the Works is required within **thirty (30) calendar days** from date of receipt of the Notice to Proceed.
11. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

MACTAN ECONOMIC ZONE
6015 Lapu-Lapu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 340-0590 to 93
Fax Nos. (032) 340-0594 to 95
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **BELENA B. SUELLO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – March 1 & 15, 2007)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/ contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time: Pre-Bid Conference	Date/Time: Deadline/ Opening of Bids	Non-Refundable Fee
150 Units Modem	P2,850,000.00	March 22, 2007 10:00 AM	April 11, 2007 1:00 PM	P 1,500.00
6,140 Bdls. Jacket for Savings Passbook with Logo. 14,200 Bdls. Jacket for Savings Signature Card.	P 969,800.00 2,438,400.00	March 29, 2007 10:00 AM	April 11, 2007 1:00 PM	P 1,800.00
25 Units Document Scanner with Bundled Software and Personal Computer.	P2,500,000.00	March 29, 2007 1:30 PM	April 11, 2007 1:00 PM	P 1,300.00
1,200,000 Pcs. ATM Plastic Cards, "HI-CO" 200,000 Pcs. ATM Plastic Cards, (Pre-Printed Cards), "HI-CO"	P7,200,000.00 1,200,000.00	March 29, 2007 3:30 PM	April 11, 2007 1:00 PM	P 4,200.00

The Bid Documents will be available at the Procurement Department (ProcD) starting March 15, 2007 and can be secured upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference will be held at ProcD Conference Room, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila.

For more information, please visit the ProcD-Requisitions Management Division or call us at telephone no. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

(PDI - March 15, 2007) BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF ALABAMA
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF AUTAUGA COUNTY
Case No. 07-032

In re: The petition of Evangeline Guerrero Jones to change the name of Duncan Guerrero

PETITIONER'S NOTICE OF HEARING

To: Dante Rodriguez & Unknown Father
Father of Minor Child

Take notice, a Petition for change of Name for Minor has been filed in said Court by Mother of Minor and May 1, 2007 at 3:30 o'clock p.m. has been set for hearing on same in said Court in the City of Prattville, Alabama.

Be advised, if you intend to contest name change, you must file a written response within thirty (30) days with the Probate Court, 176 West Fifth Street, Prattville, Alabama 36067-3041.

Done this 22nd day of February, 2007.

(Sgd.) ALFRED Q. BOOTH, Judge of Probate

(PDI--March 1, 8 & 15, 2007)

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... In Your presence is fullness of joy;
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.
(Psalms 16:11 NASB)

BGen. SIMPLICIO FELICIANO RIVERA (Ret.)

PMA Class 1937
"Piciong"

of Malabon, Metro Manila
20 November 1914 – 14 March 2007

joyfully entered the presence of
our loving God and Creator Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

He is survived by wife, **Adelina Doria-Rivera**, children and in-laws, **Simplicio "Simple" Jr.** & **Imelda Borgoña**, **Erlinda "Linda"**, **Reynaldo "Totoy"** & **Virginia "Benjie" Baylon**, **Alberto "Rocky"** & **Zinnia "Jing" Sanchez**, **Meinard** & **Leah Umandap**, **Elena** & **Joel Tuano** and his grandchildren and great-grandchild.

Visitations will be at St. Ignatius Chapel Mortuary, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City on March 15-16, 10 am-10 pm.
Necrological Service will be held on March 16 Friday at 6:30 pm.
Cremation will be at Loyola Memorial, Guadalupe, Makati on March 17, Saturday at 9 am after the 7 am Mass at St. Ignatius Chapel.

Please omit flowers

SALVADOR P. MEÑEZ, JR.

Houston, Texas, USA and Quezon City
Ateneo High School Class 1964

Peacefully joined his Creator and parents
Dr. Salvador C. Meñez *and* ***Angeles (Iday) Perez***
last January 22, 2007 in Houston, Texas at the age of 60.

His bereaved family: wife, **Marylou Prodigalidad**; children, **Eugene**, **John Paul** and **Emily**; siblings, **Myrna Conde**, **Delia Rosal**, **Sonia Cuenca**, **Tito**, **Lydia**, **Vilma** and **Virgilio**; in-laws, nephews and nieces and other relatives request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His cremains will be at The Christ the King Church, Green Meadows, Quezon City on Friday, March 16, 2007.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 17, 2007 after the 10:30 a.m. Mass at The Christ the King Church Crypt.

"I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on the rock and gave me a firm place to stand."
Psalm 40:1-2

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

Tel. Nos. Quezon City : 712-3001 • 749-3806 to 11

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION DATE & TIME	INTERMENT/CREMATION PLACE
BEATRIZ VENTOSA	Chapel – 14	3/15/2007 8:00 a.m.	South Cemetery
ALEJANDRINO B. SANTOS	Chapel – 5	to be announced later	to be announced later

We Lovingly Remember
3rd Death Anniversary of
KATRINA DIAZ VILLAROMAN

who joined her Creator on March 16, 2004
We, the parents ***Ernie*** *&* ***Lhay****; children* ***Erlynne, Camille*** *&* ***Erwin*** *request for prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.*

Holy Masses will be offered at the following Churches on March 16, 2007:

St. John Evangelist Parish, *Tapulao, Orani, Bataan* ..... 6 am
San Antonio de Padua, *West Riverside, SFDM, Q.C.* ..... 6 am

Death Notice

RAMON "Monic" EUTIQUIO
Chua Cheng Rempola
of Iriga City

peacefully joined the Lord on March 11, 2007 at the age of 41.

His remains lie in state at the residence of his father in Baranggay San Roque, Iriga City.

Interment will be on March 17, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at Iriga City cemetery.

Our Dearly Beloved

BENJAMIN SARMIENTO PASSI

Peacefully joined his Creator
on March 12, 2007.

His loving wife **Carmen Rafols**
Children
Ed & Sofia,
Guia (†) & Gil (†) Alapan,
Amy & Rod Haynes,
Mayor **Linda** & Gov. **Fernando Gonzalez,**
Tess & Gerry Batuyong,
Annie & Ken Friday
Grandchildren
Emil & Sonia; Geline, Gerald, Gandy & Greco; Ben; Dodo & Ana; Yael, Mike & Ceres; Gary & Michael;
Great-grandchildren
Patrick & Kenneth; Irish & Justine; Bea, Marla & Javi; Bobby, Amelia, Maddie & Lauren
request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio, McKinley Rd., Forbes Park, Makati City.

His cremated remains will be laid to rest at the Santuario de San Antonio Crypt on Saturday, 17th of March 2007 at 1:30 p.m.

CLASSIFIEDS

UE

The **UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST**
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- Must be a Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
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More Classifieds

PSALM A22

ATTY. JUAN L. AGAS, PhD, MNSA, MPA

Retired Commissioner, National Police Commission
Vice President, Philippine Public Safety College
Vice President and Dean, Philippine College of Criminology
Criminology Review Director, Metro Manila College

His bereaved family, wife **RUSTICA (†)**; children **Giovanni** and **Tessie**, **Judge Volt** and **Mimi**, **Jonathan** and **Amy**; **Dr. Pamela**, **Michelle (†)**, **Christian (†)** and **Maricar**, **Dr. Lyndon** and **May**; grandchildren **Vanessa (†)**, **Vanjo**, **Jillian**, **Blooie**, **Joyce**, **Jerome**, **Jineb**, **Janelle**, **Jamela**, **Justine**, **Franz**, **Jana**, **Tria**, **Krishna**, **Kristan**, **Kiana**, **Vincent**, **Nikki**, **Dave** and **Anthony**, sister and brothers **Rosa**, **Felix** and **Prima**, **Moises** and **Julie** and all other relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in prayers for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Nacional Memorial Homes, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on March 17, 2007 at the Eternal Garden Memorial Park, Caloocan City at 3 p.m. after the 1 p.m. Mass at the chapel.

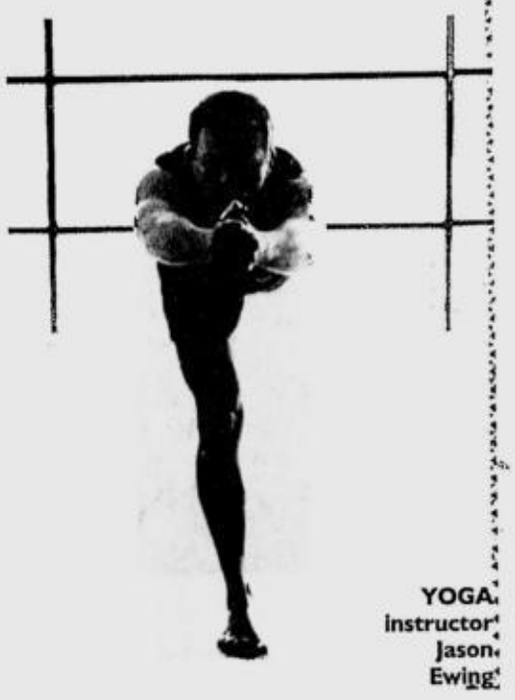
CLASSIFIEDS

Yoga expert in town for C2 event

"INCLUDE YOGA INTO YOUR life and it could help you stay focused." Thus said international Bikram Yoga instructor Jason Ewing, who will be in Manila for the C2 Green Tea yoga session dubbed "Live Life Series: Yoga Awakenings" at Rockwell Tent on March 17. Ewing has been practicing and living the Yoga way of life for almost 10 years. Certified in the Bikram method, Ewing has trained at Bikram's Yoga College of India in Beverly Hills, California.

In 2000, Ewing opened his first Bikram Yoga Studio in Atlanta and soon became one of the most successful studios in the Southeast region of America. Celebrity students who have taken his class include Jane Fonda, Evander Hollifield, and Charles Barkley. Aside from leading the yoga session at the C2 "Live Life Series," Ewing will also talk about the advantages of integrating yoga into one's busy life. "As an instructor, I have found that a chemical reaction occurs after a yoga class that can help put one in a better mood and make the mind clearer."

Just like C2 Green Tea, the truly refreshing, cool and clean drink that is rich in health-preserving antioxidants. C2 Green Tea is perfectly brewed and bottled on the same day locking in all of the flavor and health-preserving antioxidants that are found naturally in green tea leaves. To attend C2's "Live Life Series: Yoga Awakenings", please call Stacy Alfonso at 0922-9610677 or 897-2472, or e-mail stacy.alfonso@eventscapemanila.com. Live your life, refresh your senses and recharge your soul with C2's "Live Life Series".



YOGA instructor Jason Ewing

BUSINESS

IT zone set to rise on former IS property

Property firm now seeking accreditation from Peza

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE FIRST INFORMATION TECHnology park in Makati is set to rise on the former site of the International School of Manila, land developer Century Properties Inc. announced on Wednesday.

The realty company, which won the bidding for the property in June 2006, said that construction work on the five-hectare Information Technology park will start in the second quarter of the year.

The IT park will be developed with the help of architecture and urban planning firm Jerde Partnership.

It will have both residential and commercial buildings, an IT school, and a high-end hotel.

A minimum of 160,000 square meters will be allocated for "Grade A office spaces."

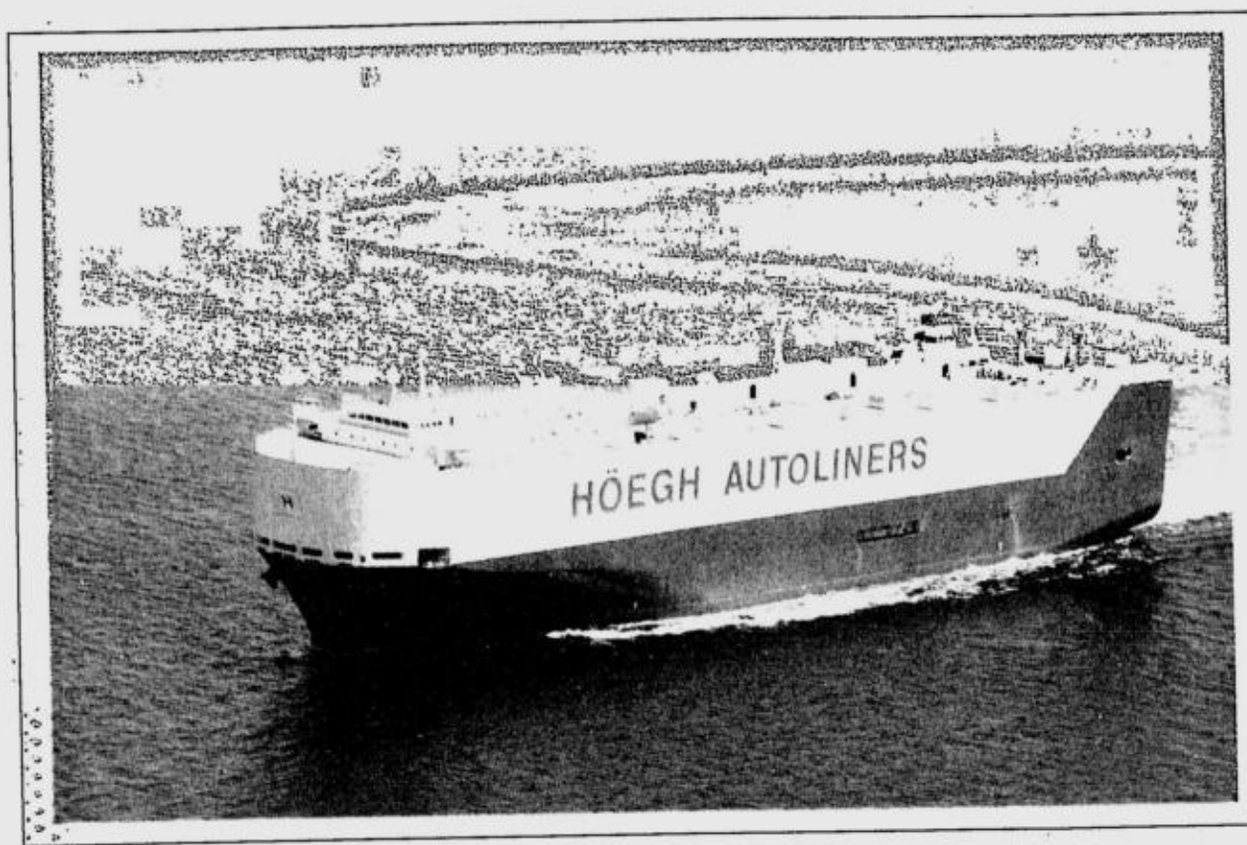
"The office market has changed dramatically in recent months, with lease rates hovering in the P1,000 per meter range, and strong demand continues to fuel the growth of the real estate industry," Century Properties managing director Marco Antonio said in a statement. "It makes sense for developers to start building offices again."

The IT park will cater to the business process outsourcing sector, particularly the high-end BPOs who are willing to pay premium rates for a good location.

"We are currently applying for Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) accreditation and will most likely exceed the minimum requirement of one hectare for the IT park," Antonio said. "We feel that we are poised to deliver products by 2008 or early 2009 for the first batch of office buildings."

Antonio also revealed Century Properties' plan to donate land to put up an IT school in the area.

"We believe that there will be a huge complementary relationship between the school and the availability of qualified manpower to eventually work in our buildings," he said.



SAILING AWAY The Philippine shipping industry marked another milestone with the completion of the country's first pure car and truck carrier, the biggest ship ever produced in the country. The ship built in Balanban, Cebu by Tsuneishi Heavy Industries Inc. of the Aboitiz group is 13 stories tall and can carry 5,100 cars.

BSP expects bad loan ratio to fall below 5%

By Doris C. Dumlao

ESPENILLA

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas expects the commercial banking system's bad loan ratio to fall below the 5-percent mark this year—much closer to the average level of 3-4 percent before the Asian currency crisis erupted in 1997.

The banking system's stock of bad loans peaked as a ratio of total loans at 18.81 percent in October 2001, as many corporate borrowers defaulted on their debts, while banks turned cautious in providing new loans after the Asian turmoil resulted in sharp currency devaluations and interest rate hikes.

Nestor Espenilla Jr., BSP deputy governor for bank supervision, told reporters that banks would likely scramble to unload soured loans in bulk in the coming months as the extended Special Purpose Vehicle Law would expire in April next year.

"If you follow the experience of SPV 1 (first SPV law), (the banks) moved aggressively in the last six months, so if that late surge happens again, it will easily (go below) 5 percent," Espenilla said.

Under the SPV Law, some of the taxes are waived while fees that are usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets are reduced to encourage banks to clean up the bad assets that have piled up since the Asian crisis. The law also scrapped the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and e-VAT (expanded value-added tax), while it reduced registration and transfer fees by 50 percent.

Based on the BSP's latest report, the nonperforming loans of Philippine commercial banks at the end of December fell to a new post-Asian crisis low of 6.01 percent as a ratio of total loans, from 6.9 percent at end-November.

The BSP in the next few days will release the NPL update for January.

"Part of the (January) report is an adjustment of the December figure," Espenilla said. "(The ratio) will probably be lower than 6.01 percent because there were late reports from some banks. The 6-percent (mark) had likely been breached."

The bulk unloading of soured loans through the SPV framework has turned out to be a more effective way of cleaning up banks' books as against restructuring, or giving easier terms to borrowers such as stretching out the maturity or reducing interest payments.

Based on end-2006 figures, 45.1 percent of banks' total restructured loans worth P86.3 billion turned sour anew.

Asked whether most restructuring deals after the Asian crisis were ineffective, Espenilla explained that some banks think they are better off selling and writing off losses, before moving on.

That way, he said, the bad assets become "the problem of the buyer.

"Anyway, the buyers got it cheap so there's more flexibility."

Meanwhile, Espenilla said that a new Supreme Court resolution that speeds up foreclosure proceedings would not only allow banks to better deal with real and other properties owned and acquired (ropoa), but allow them to sell future nonperforming loans (NPLs) for a better price.

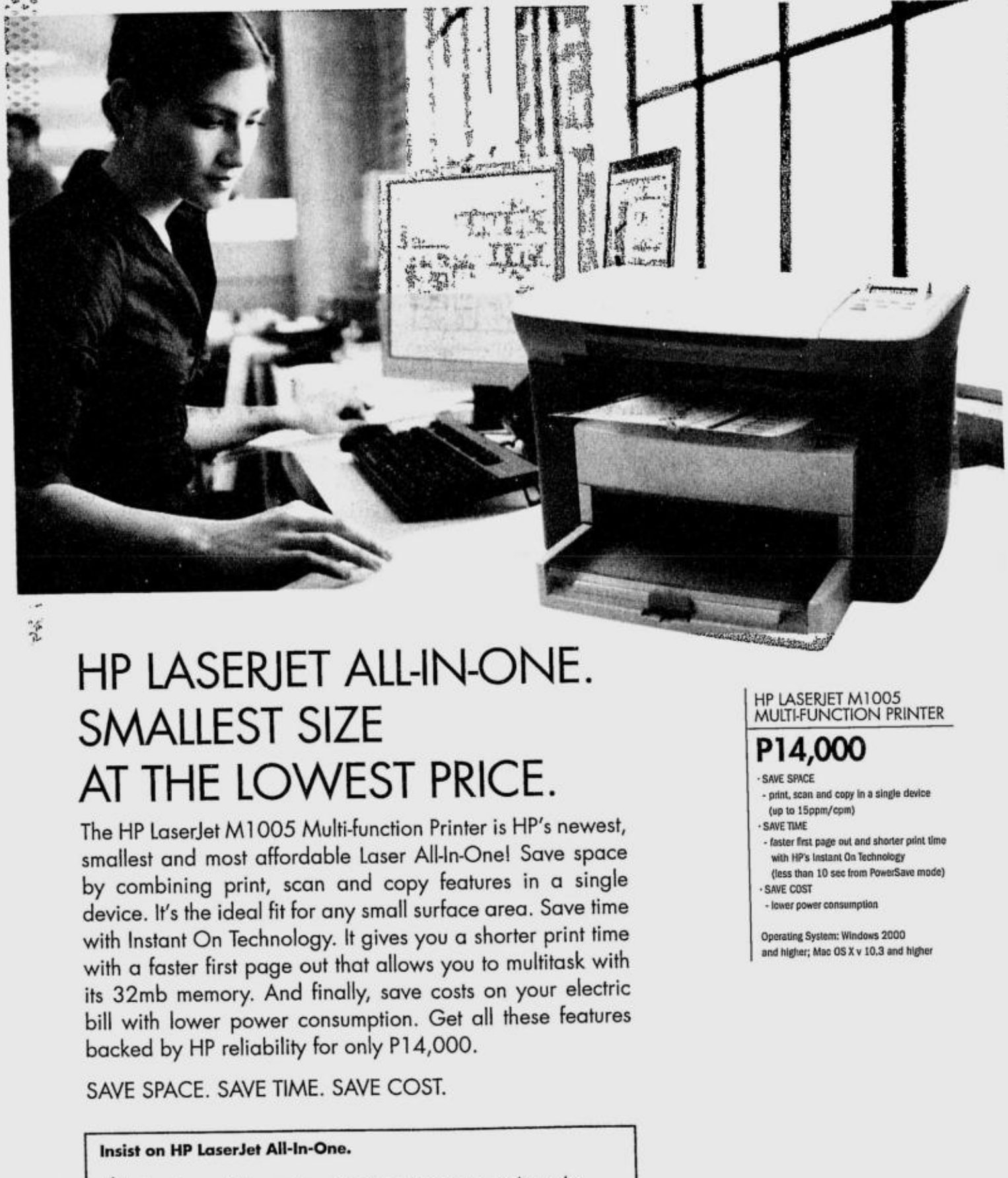
He said tough foreclosure proceedings in the Philippines were part of the reason why NPLs were being sold at a steep discount.

"That's actually one of the reasons why there's a discount on nonperforming loans," Espenilla said. "The size of the discount represents the difficulty of collecting."

"So there are two positive effects. For bad (loan) accounts, they may appreciate in value because it may be easier for whoever who bought those loans to collect. It may have a positive effect on the secondary price of nonperforming loans. And, of course, the other (effect), it's potentially easier to collect or to foreclose."

In a recent en banc resolution, the Supreme Court recently amended procedures in extrajudicial or judicial foreclosure of real estate mortgages by tightening the rules on the issuance of temporary restraints order or ccurt injunctions against foreclosure.

The Bankers Association of the Philippines said the reforms in foreclosure proceedings would even have a more significant impact in strengthening the banking system's financial conditon than the fiscal incentives granted under the SPV law.



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THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2007

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KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aspiras

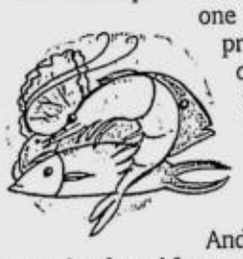
Good ol' fish and chips

FAMOUS English fare fish and chips are actually known elsewhere as fried battered fish and French fries.

Even hardcore carnivores will like this quintessential Brit meal

RELIGION HAS TAUGHT US to go meatless on Ash Wednesday, all the Fridays of Lent, Maundy Thursday and Black Saturday as a form of penance and self-denial.

But recent medical studies have shown that the consumption of fish is, in fact, beneficial to one who is in a state of prayer and meditation. For only a sound and healthy mind is best equipped for such mental activity.



Fish contains omega-3 fatty acids also known as brain food. And the brain is made up mostly of good fatty acids with the majority of it being omega-3, of which our body produces very little. Hence a diet rich in omega-3 is said to increase the mind's capacity for learning, heightens its problem-solving skills, helps it focus and aids in memory retention. It also promotes positive mood and emotional balance, both of which are vital to our well-being.

The proverbial question is how to encourage people to eat more fish. It is quite difficult for many to opt for fish over *lechon*! But even the hardcore carnivore will agree that the quintessential Brit meal of good old fish and chips might just do the trick!

The origin of fish and chips eaten together is a cause of debate. Some say that it stemmed from French and Jewish culinary traditions when the *frites*—French fries—were served with Jewish fish dishes. Other say that it was a Sephardi dish—*pescado frito*—deep-fried fish brought by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews to England in the 17th and 18th centuries.

So inculcated in English culture is it that Charles Dickens made mention of it in "Oliver Twist," with reference to a "fried fish warehouse." Perhaps it is because the main concern in the mid-19th century was to eat to sustain oneself, and fish and chips served the purpose for it is a complete, nutritious and affordable meal by itself.

According to the National Federation of Fish Friers, in the UK alone, 9,000 fried fish vendors sell 300 million fish-and-chips meals a year.

The Perfect Chips

2 k potatoes, peeled and chipped

- Heat oil (no second-hand oil please!) to 360ºF, preferably in a deep fat fryer or any cooking vessel large and thick enough to hold enough oil for deep frying. Avoid aluminum pans.

Tips for perfect chips:

- Cut fries and soak in cold water for at least 10 minutes to give added crispness and to avoid sticking together as they cook. A bit of vinegar to the water solution will avoid discoloration.
- Leave skin on potatoes for flavor and nutrition.
- Use a salad spinner to dry chips before frying to reduce fat absorption.
- If you have time, try blanching your potatoes in oil. This step makes crisper fries. The way to do this is to heat the oil to 350ºF and cooking the potatoes without browning them so the potatoes cook slowly. Drain fries on paper towels and cool to room temperature. Arrange them on a rack and refrigerate. Before serving, heat oil to 360ºF and refry the potatoes.
- Potato variety plays a major role. Russets make the best. Russet or not, follow these tips and your chips will be better than ever!

Don't know if the following is perfect but this is a recipe that has served me well.

The Perfect Batter

1 k white fish fillets
Extra flour for dredging
Batter:
2 c all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
2 c beer
3 eggs
Salt and pepper

- After frying chips, increase oil temperature to 375ºF.
- Wipe fillets dry.
- Put flour on plate and dredge fish. This stops the fish batter from coming off.
- Mix all the batter ingredients in a large bowl and whisk until smooth.
- Take fish one at a time holding it by the tail. Swirl around batter until evenly coated.
- Plunge into hot oil.
- Fry until golden, drain on paper towels and serve immediately.

Garlic Vinegar
1 c malt vinegar
1 jalapeño
2 tbsp garlic

FISH/ C2

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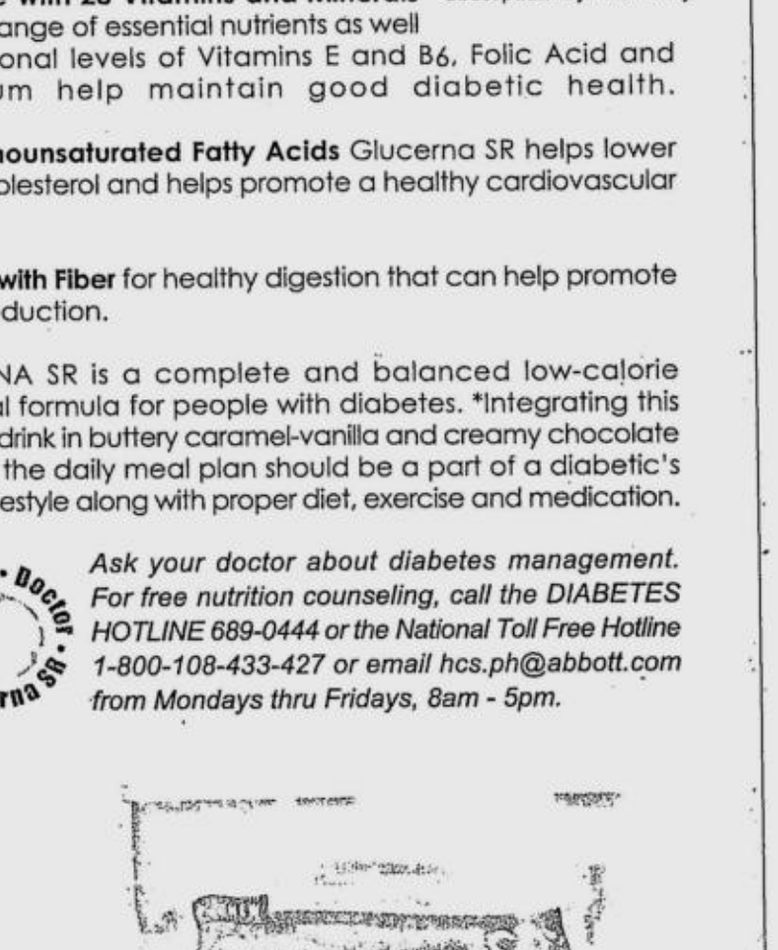
Financial Adviser, Wife, Glucerna SR User



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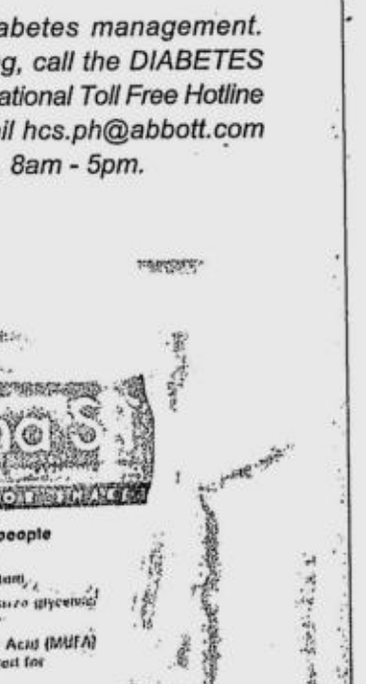


DINING OUT

Specials for meatless Lenten season

AZZURRO BISTRO OFFERS FISH AND seafood fusion set menus for Lenten season for as low as P265+. They include Ponzu-Glazed Mahi-Mahi served with Asian risotto cakes; Fillet of Sole in Lemon Cream Sauce served with Crispy Potato Pompey and Vegetable Panache; and Fish d'Jour, Azzurro's fresh catch of the day, in Lemon Caper Sauce. Also available are Steamed Tilapia Parcels in Coco Cream and Asian Pesto Sauces; Steamed Pomphret in Soy Ginger; and Spaghettini al Pesto with Grilled Skewered Prawns. Call 6387878 local 8446 or 8201, 8890569 and 8842239.

INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA presents Chilean Sea Bass Festival at the Prince Albert Rotisserie and an Argentinian Churrasco at Café Jeepney until March 26. Call 8159711.

DUSIT HOTEL'S Benjarong Royal Thai Restaurant presents "Sojourn to Bangkok," March 15-25, featuring a la carte dishes like Roti Gaeng Kiew Wan (green curry US tenderloin with *naan* bread); Poo Talay Phad Phrik Thai Dum (stir-fried crab with spicy herbs); Nuea Sab Phad Makhea Yaw (stir-fried minced beef with eggplant); Pla Insee Savoey (deep-fried mackerel topped with green curry sauce); and Pop Oay Luy Fai (stir-fried spinach with prawns in oyster sauce). Call 8673333.

CENTURY PARK HOTEL'S Café in the Park offers Chef's Special Creations featuring Roasted Tasmanian Trout with Basil and Lemon Myrtle served with Purple Rice and Vegetable Macedon; Fish and Shellfish "Session" on Saffron Rice served with Pumpkin Puree and Watercress Sauce; Charcoal-broiled US Rib-Eye overbaked with Cottage Cheese; and US Angus Tenderloin of Beef in Carpet Bag with Wild Mushrooms served with Garibaldi Vegetables and Sage Sauce. Call 5288888.

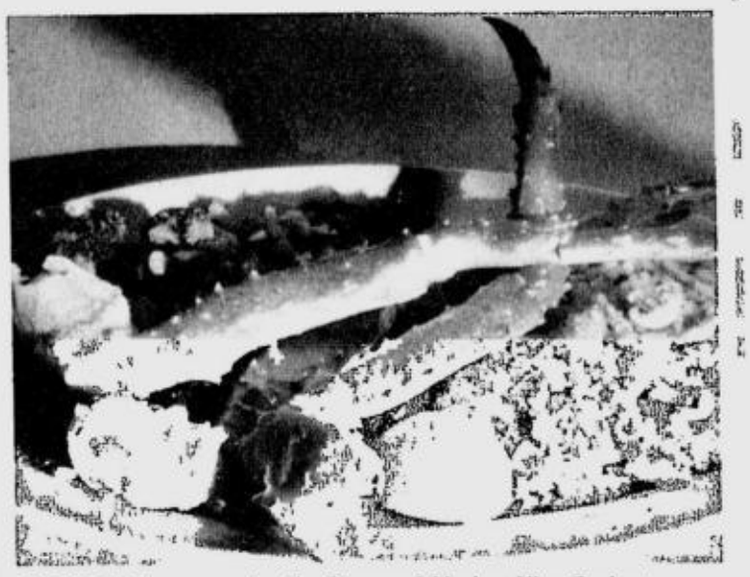
CROWNE PLAZA Galleria Manila's Seven Corners Restaurant offers a "3+1 Promo" with its Saturday International Lunch Buffet. Every group of four persons pays only for three. Seven Corners is on 3/F, Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, cor. Ortigas and Asian Development Bank Avenues, Ortigas Center. Call 6337222.

HOLIDAY INN GALLERIA'S Fab offers "Dine with 3, the 4th is Free." Every group of four gets one free buffet. Priced at P750+ per person, the lunch or dinner buffet comes with a complimentary round of soft drinks or iced tea. This month, a rolling trolley of daily specials is prepared. It includes *halo-halo* special, tropical fruit flambés, fresh seafood and oysters on a bed of ice, native hot *tsokolate*, Filipino *kakanin*, *sago't gulaman*, or *buko pandan* served fresh on a coconut shell. Call 6337111.

MANILA PAVILION'S Rotisserie offers The Graduate's Luxury set menus this month. Set A includes Smoked Salmon Crepes with Creamy Horseradish and Tomato Capers Salad; Broccoli Flower Cappuccino with Swiss Cheese Melt and Bread Twist; Fresh Fruit Frozen Shooter with Mint Syrup; Rotisserie Roast US Black Angus Beef on Marble Potatoes with Forest Mushroom Gravy and Baked Spinach Pie; and Warm Caramelized Banana Tar with Chocolate Ice Cream. Set B includes Grilled Prawn and Goose Liver Salad with Truffle Vinaigrette; Beef Consomme with Bone Marrow; Lemon Sherbet; Oven-baked Norweigan Salmon on Saffron Risotto with Asparagus Fritters; Praline Chocolate Soufflé and Rochers. Rotisserie is open for lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Friday; and for dinner, 6:30-10:30 p.m., Monday-Saturday. Call 5261212 local 2505.

MAKATI Shangri-La's Chinese restaurant, Shang Palace, brings to Manila the celebrated Huaiyang Cuisine, March 12-24. Also known as Jiangsu cuisine, it is a fusion of the diverse tastes and styles of Yangzhou, Nanjing, Suzhou and Zhenjiang. The distinguished cuisine was chosen for the first state banquet of the new People's Republic and was also featured on the menu of the People's Republic's 50th anniversary state dinner. Makati Shangri-La is featuring two guest chefs from Traders Fudu Hotel, Changzhou: Roger Xu and Lucky Liu. Call 8400844 or 8138888 ext. 7588/7599.

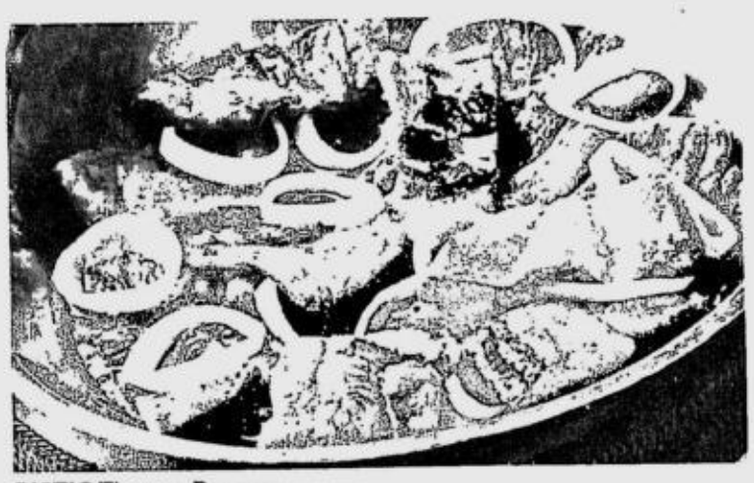
KITARO has Seafood Chuukadon topped with assorted seafood favorites like *ika* (squid), *ebi* (shrimp) and *maguro* (tuna) mixed with shitake mushrooms and fresh vegetables, sauteed in Kitaro's special *donburi* sauce for only P180. Call 9111115.



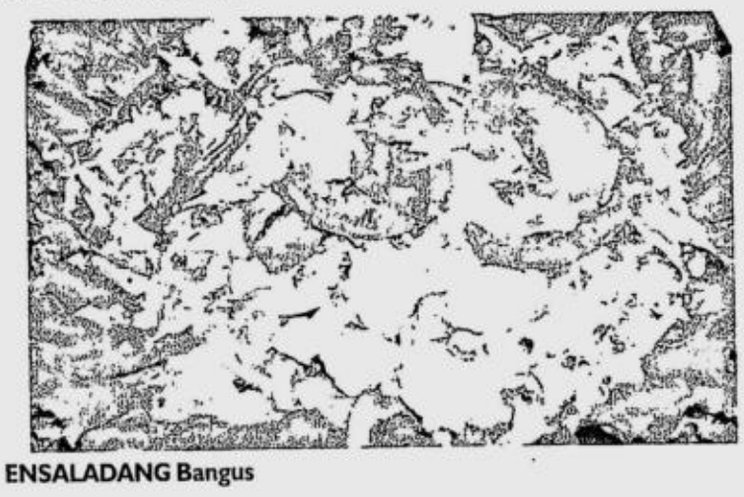
SEAFOOD lovers can try the Steamed Alaskan King Crab at Gumbo. It is served with mixed vegetables (carrots, green beans, corn and broccoli) plus mushroom and Cajun rice with Cajun butter sauce. To cap this special dish are the restaurant's desserts which you can avail for free upon order of this dish. Call 5560238-39 and 4420106.

SUPER Bowl of China introduces eight additions to its menu of authentic Cantonese dishes including the Soft Shell Crabs with Spicy Salt. The new dishes are available for a limited time only. Call 7378888.

Twin buffet offerings for Lenten observers and graduates



BISTIG Tiyan ng Bangus



ENSALADANG Bangus

CABALEN FEATURES BACK-TO-BACK TREATS this month: the Bangus Festival and the Graduation '07 promo.

To highlight the Lenten season, the premier buffet restaurant in the country features six *bangus* dishes during its Bangus Festival: Lumpiang Bangus, Ensaladang Bangus, Sigang Tiyan ng Bangus sa Sampalok, Escabeche Bangus—the main course, Binusog na Tinapang Bangus and Inihaw na Bangus sa Buro at Mustasa.

Cabalen also shares the joy of seeing the youth prepare for graduation day by giving a 50-percent discount to any graduation party with a minimum of six guests.

Cabalen restaurants are at West Avenue, QC; 2/L, SM North Edsa, QC; 4/L, Bldg B, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong; 2/L, Robinsons Place Ermita, Manila; Glorietta 3, Makati; G/L, Robinsons Starmall, San Fernando, Pampanga; 3/L, Chefs Avenue Festival Mall, Alabang; G/F, SM City, Clark, CSEZ Clarkfield Pampanga; and soon-to-open at G/F, Sta. Lucia Grand East Mall.

Call 9111584 for reservation; and 4219220 or 9135522 for catering services.

BINUSOG Tinapang Bangus

LUMPIANG Bangus

Freshly grilled specialties

FASTFOOD EATING IS NO LONGER just about burgers, fried chicken and *carinderia* choices. Healthier and tastier options are now available with a wider selection of affordable menu items for the more discriminating foodcourt customers.

Davao Tuna Grill, which first opened in SM Megamall in 2004, is one such establishment. It takes fastfood dining to a whole new level as it deviates from the usual *turo-turo* style and budget-meal offerings.

Davao Tuna Grill offers grilled specialties, such as Grilled Tuna Belly and Grilled Tuna Panga, cooked fresh upon order.

Popular among the younger Davao Tuna Grill regulars are its four varieties of *sisig*: pork, tuna, squid and *bangus*. Squid and tuna *sisig* are a favorite of weight-watching teenagers.

Meanwhile, the Sinigang na Panga is a crowd-pleaser among big-eaters and families as the *panga* serving is generous, and with the tangy *sinigang* soup it can, in fact, feed a family of three.

Other grilled specialties include Grilled Squid, Inihaw na Liempo and Chicken Inasal.

The success of Davao Tuna Grill in the foodcourts has encouraged its owners, bank executive Huntley Uy and wife, former broadcast executive-turned-entrepreneur Amy Uy, to partner with more malls in making Davao Tuna Grill a healthy option in the foodcourts.

Over the past two years, six branches have opened in various malls including SM Mall of Asia, SM Megamall, SM North Edsa, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Galleria and Shangri-la Plaza, with more to open before the end of 2007.

Recipes for the meatless days

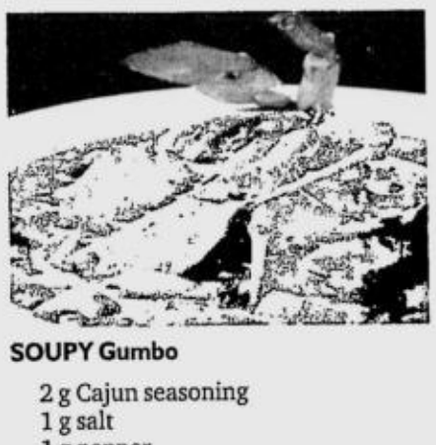
CLAWDADDY CRAB HOUSE AND American Grill is a brainchild of two restaurant groups, Red Crab and New Orleans.

The collaboration between Raymund Magdaluyo of the Red Crab group and his grandfather's best friend, Murray Hertz of the New Orleans Restaurant, has resulted in the new dining attraction called ClawDaddy Crab House and American Grill. Their offerings include family favorites such as crabs, lobsters and oysters.

ClawDaddy (tel. 6365679) at 6/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong, shares the following recipes in time for Lenten observation of abstaining from pork, beef and chicken.

Cajun Crab Claws

80 g crabmeat
30 g shrimps
15 g onions
15 g celery



SOUPY Gumbo

2 g Cajun seasoning
1 g salt
1 g pepper
1 g thyme
3 g seafood boil
1 pc egg
45 g breadcrumbs
160 g crab claws

Prepare crab claws by boiling in hot water. Open crab claws and leave the meat intact.

In a hot pan, heat up oil. Saute onions, celery and garlic. Saute crab meat and shrimps until cooked.

Season with salt, pepper, thyme, Cajun seasoning and seafood boil.

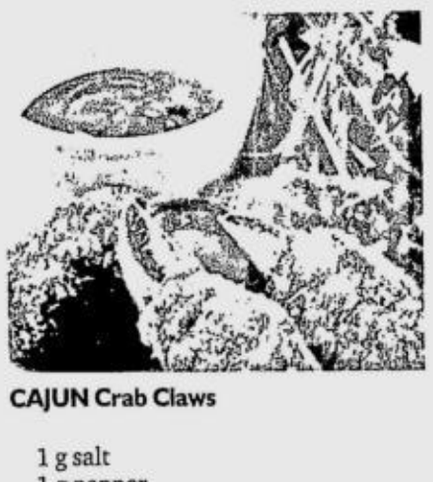
Take the crabmeat filling and wrap around the crab claw. Take the crab meat claw and coat with flour, beaten egg, then coat with breadcrumbs.

Deep-fry in hot oil at 375°F until golden brown.

Serve with lemon-garlic butter, *chipotle aioli* and lemon wedges.

Soupy Gumbo

15 g tomato paste
10 g red bell pepper
10 g green bell pepper
5 g onions
5 g celery
5 g garlic
1 g cayenne pepper
1 g oregano
2 g fresh basil
1 g thyme
1 g basil leaves



CAJUN Crab Claws

1 g salt
1 g pepper
500 ml soup stock
300 g oysters
60 g okra
300 g crab
1 g gumbo seasoning

Saute onions, celery, red and green bell pepper until translucent. Add garlic. Add stock. Add oregano, thyme, fresh basil.

Add the cooked crab, oysters and okra. Simmer. Season to taste with salt, pepper and gumbo seasoning.

Fish and chips

From page C1

1 ½ tsp salt
Combine above ingredients.

Tartar Sauce

1 tbsp lemon juice
1 ½ c mayonnaise
2 tbsp sweet pickles
1 tbsp mustard
2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
1 tbsp capers, drained and chopped
Salt and pepper
Sugar to taste
Mix above ingredients.

Deep frying tips:

- Make sure that the oil is at the right temperature.
- Do not overload the pan. Whatever it is you are frying must fit snugly.
- Before frying the next batch, bring oil back to its required temperature.

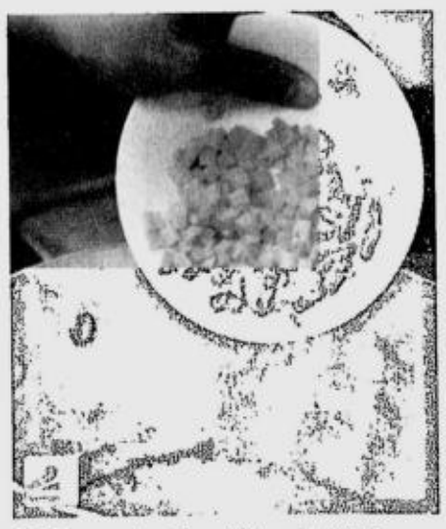
Odds and ends:

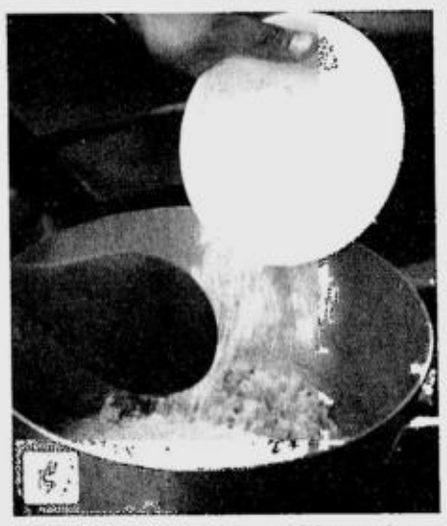
- Fish used: Cod. But Pollock, Haddock, Skate or any other white tender-fleshed fish will do, too.
- Serve fish and chips with salt and malt vinegar as the English do or with ketchup, tartar sauce, mayonnaise, even barbecue sauce!
- Throw in pickled onions, pickled eggs, fresh lemon wedges and gherkins.
- The standard side dish to fish and chips are mashed peas.
- French Fries are known as chips in the UK. Traditionally, potatoes were fried in beef fat though many have veered away from that practice for health reasons.
- To complete the look, wrap your fish and chips in baking paper and finish off with an outer layer of newspaper. Nothing could be more Brit than this!

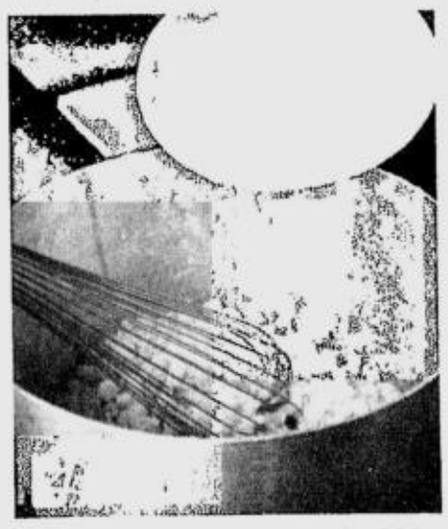
My new class schedules are out! Call 9289296, 9273008.

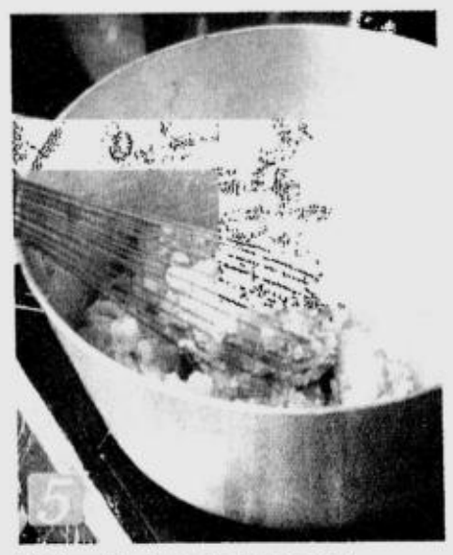
E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

MELT butter in a large, heavy sauce pan over medium heat. Add onions and cook until translucent.


ADD carrots, stir until tender. Add potatoes.


TURN off heat. Add flour. Using a wire whisk, mix until well combined.


TURN on heat to low fire. Slowly whisk in reserved clam juice.


MIX until mixture is dry enough.

Chowder gives clams star billing

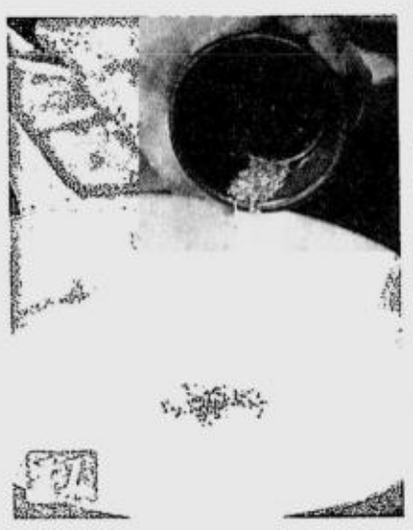
GRADUALLY add milk while stirring continuously.

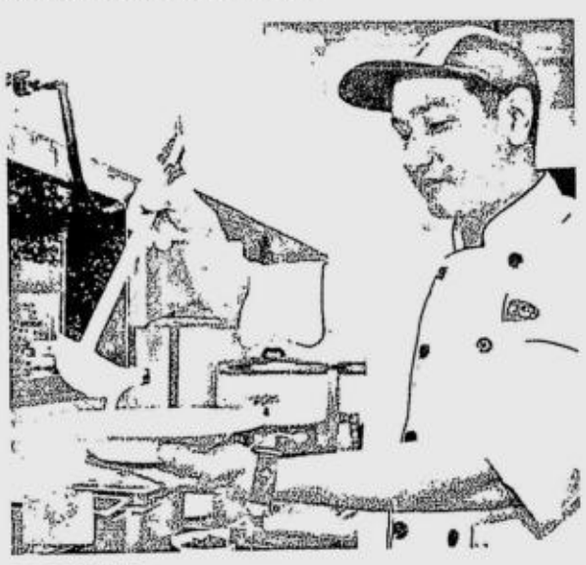
STIR in water.

IF you have a temperature probe, make sure it reaches 74°C. Or let it just simmer for five minutes. Stir and leave for another five minutes.

ADD clams meat.

ADD cooking cream and iodized salt. Simmer for five minutes to reduce liquid and thicken the soup.


AFTER at least three minutes, add oregano.


TRANSFER to a soup cup.

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

IT IS THE SEASON OF LENT and Catholics are supposed to observe meatless Fridays again.

Here is a recipe that even confirmed meat eaters will probably find irresistible. It is filling, invigorating and delicious.

For this seafood dish, neither fish nor shrimp gets star billing. Instead, we savor the goodness of clams, sold in the market live in shells or shucked fresh or frozen. If not available fresh in the market, we can also use canned clams.

Clams are high in protein and contain fair amounts of calcium and iron.

Chowder is a thick, chunky seafood soup, and clam chowder, the best known variety, is simply chowder with clams for its main ingredients.

Similarly, there are several versions of clam chowder, but the most popular are the New England and Manhattan clam chowders. New England-style chowder is made with milk or cream, while Manhattan-style with tomatoes.

"The nice thing about clam chowder is it can be a meal in itself given the seafood and vegetables that go into it," says Bryan Salarzon of Fish & Co., which opened recently its third outlet at the ground floor, Entertainment Mall, South Wing of SM Mall of Asia.

The New England Clam Chowder is the restaurant's all-time bestseller.

The ingredients for clam chowder recipe are clams, potatoes and carrots. With this recipe, the soup still turns out great, even if canned clams are used.

Salarzon says you still get plenty of the "clammy" flavor even if your main ingredient comes from a can.

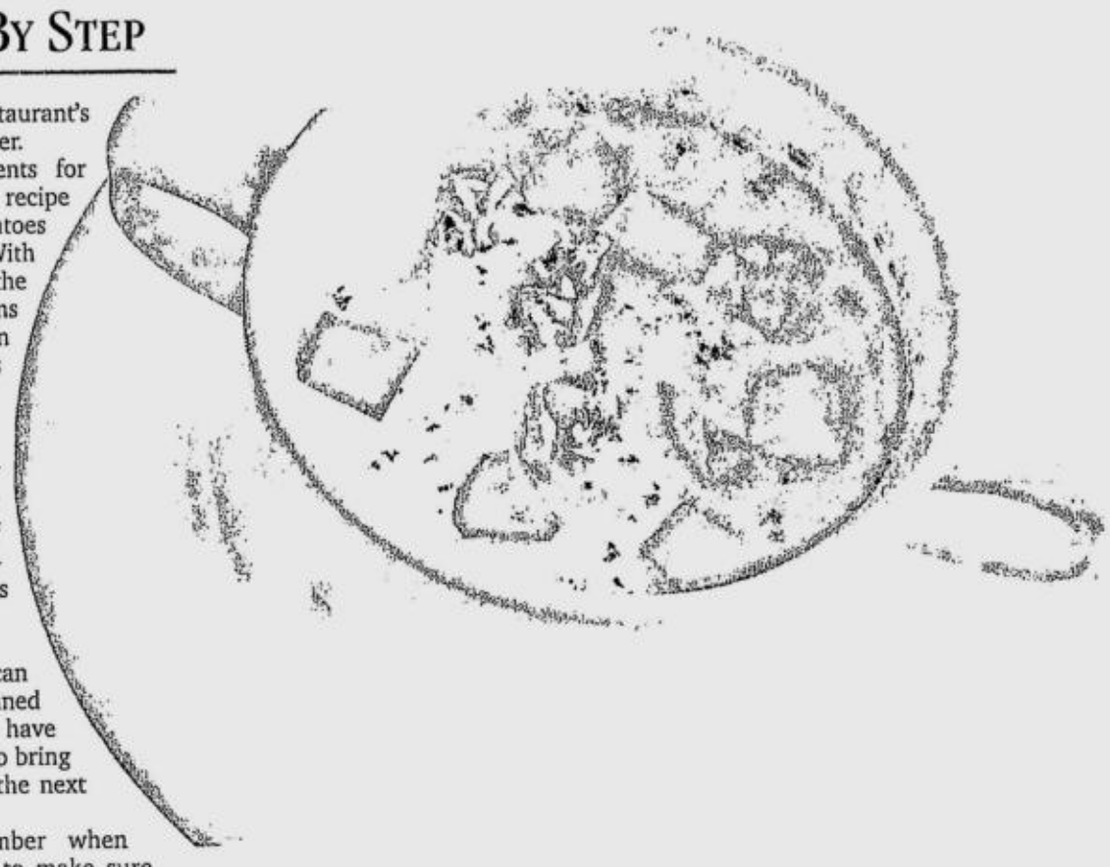
"Steamed fresh clams can replace the canned clams if you have time or want to bring this recipe to the next level," he says.

Just remember when buying clams to make sure the shells are tightly closed. If a shell is slightly open, tap it lightly. If it doesn't snap shut, the clam is dead and should be discarded.

What makes this chowder special is not just the flavor, but the way it looks, too. The simple combination of carrots, potatoes, clams and oregano adds depth to the broth.

But since the dish is simmered for a short period, vegetables keep their vibrant colors, adding to the soup's visual appeal.

Step By Step



Ingredients

80 g unsalted butter
100 g white onion, diced
50 g carrots, cubed
50 g potatoes, cubed
160 g plain flour
1 ½ liter water
1 liter UHT milk
¼ tsp dried oregano
1 can Vinisi baby clams meat, drained, juices reserved
240 ml Elle and Vire cooking cream
Iodized salt

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

NEW England Clam Chowder

Delightful treats for the holy days

BRUSH UP ON YOUR CULINARY know-how. Prepare your very own version of the Roasted Vegetables, Corn Bread and Strawberry Shortcake courtesy of Glad and Cooking Basics Culinary School.

Roasted vegetables

1 zucchini
1 sweet green pepper
1 sweet red pepper
1 eggplant (medium)
1 onion
¼ c olive oil
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper

Cut zucchini lengthwise in half. Core and seed sweet peppers then cut into quarters.

Cut eggplant lengthwise in half. Cut onion into ½-inch thick slices. Lay vegetables on a baking sheet lined with Glad Bake Paper.

In a small bowl, combine olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Brush this marinade on the vegetables. Reserve some of the marinade for roasting.

Preheat oven to 400 °F. Roast vegetables until tender, about 15 minutes. Baste with olive-oil mixture from time to time. Remove from oven.

Slice zucchini and eggplant diagonally into two-inch squares. Slice sweet pepper into strips. Mix all roasted vegetables together.

STRAWBERRY Shortcake

Corn Bread

1 c yellow cornmeal
1 c flour
1/3 c sugar
1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp cream of tartar
¾ tsp salt
1 c sour cream
¼ c milk
3 eggs, slightly beaten
¼ c melted unsalted butter
½ c corn kernels

Extra melted butter for Glad Ovenware pan

Preheat oven to 375 °F. Butter a square, 8x8 Glad Ovenware pan.

In a medium-size bowl, sift cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking soda, cream of tartar and salt together. Add the sour cream, milk, eggs and melted butter. Stir in corn kernels. Stir just enough to mix.

Pour into greased Glad Ovenware pan. Bake in preheated oven for 25 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for a few minutes, slice and serve.

ROASTED Vegetables

Strawberry Shortcake

For cake:

1 c unsalted butter, room temperature
½ c sugar (for butter mixture)
½ c sugar (for egg white mixture)
5 eggs, separated (room temperature)
5 tbsp milk
1 ½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
1 ½ c cake flour
1 tsp vanilla

Whipped topping:

½ c all-purpose cream, chilled overnight
2 tbsp powdered sugar
1 ½ c sliced strawberries

Preheat oven to 325 °F. Prepare one square, 8x8 Glad Ovenware pan.

Sift cake flour, baking powder and salt together in a medium-size bowl. Divide dry ingredients into three parts. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar well until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks one at a time, making sure you beat it well after each addition (yolks should be beaten well or you get a hard cake). Add vanilla and stir to blend.

Divide milk into two parts. Add one part of the dry ingredients to butter mixture alternately with one part of the milk, stirring each time just until ingredients are combined, starting and ending with the dry ingredients.

In a separate large mixing bowl, beat egg whites and sugar until it forms stiff peaks. Gently but thoroughly fold in the egg whites into the batter. Pour into the prepared Glad Ovenware pan.

Position on the lowest rack of the oven. Bake for an hour.

When cake is done, allow to cool on a rack before finishing with whipped cream and strawberries.

Whipped cream:

Put chilled all-purpose cream in a bowl and whip until almost doubled in volume. Add powdered sugar and whip until stiff. Set aside and refrigerate before using.

Spread whipped cream mixture on the cooled cake and decorate with strawberries on top. Slice and serve.

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

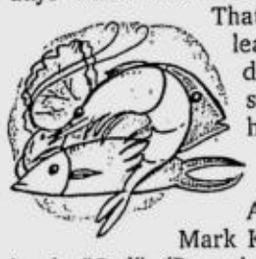
Joyful meatless days

YAPYAP (river shrimps) cooked in gata and kamias

IN THE MIDDLE OF AN eight-course dinner, someone said, "We can't eat the last course. It's steak with foie gras. And it's Friday."

Everyone stopped at mid-bite. Then someone said, "It's Saturday!" Everyone was so relieved and gave out a good laugh.

Fridays, especially during the Lenten season, should be days of abstinence, days when one shouldn't eat meat. That's what we learned as students in Catholic schools. And it has been the practice since the Middle Ages.



Mark Kurlansky in his book "Cod" (Penguin Books, 1997) wrote how "the eating of flesh were forbidden, but eating 'cold' foods was permitted. Because fish came from water, it was deemed cold ... meat was considered hot food."

Kurlansky said it was a great opportunity for Basques who controlled the cod industry at the time. And the practice of eating cod or *bacalao* was brought here by the Spaniards.

Having grown up not eating *bacalao*, I find it difficult to appreciate what is essentially dried fish, desalted, then cooked like a stew. Nothing can beat fresh fish cooked any way.

But for people who grew up waiting for Good Friday to taste *bacalao* cooked in the Spanish way, even with adaptations, the experience was something to look forward to.

In the book "Slow Food" (Anvil Publishing, 2005), Felice Sta. Maria and Guillermo Ramos, Jr. both wrote of their *bacalao* memories. Both have roots in Cavite where the port was the gateway through which ingredients needed for *bacalao* passed.

Sta. Maria's mother-in-law cooked *bacalao* a la Biscayna, adapted from the Basque "a la Vizcaina." When the imported dried cod wasn't available, then salted *lapu-lapu* (*daing*) did as well. Dried *choricero* pepper (Capsicum annum) was replaced by red bell pepper or canned *pimenton*. Thick olive oil and stuffed olives with red tomatoes were part of the stew.

Ramos' Cavite *bacalao* is cooked also in the Basque way, a la *pil-pil*, frying the fish gently in oil in the pan using a circular motion. Then the salsa is cooked by sauteing in olive oil "the garlic, onion, tomato, bell pepper, chili pepper (*siling labuyo*) and bay leaf" to which are added "precooked chickpeas and green olives."

What is more interesting is how this essentially Basque dish is served with "steaming white rice and freshly grated mango in brine or, better yet, *burong mangga* (green mango slices cured in brined rice wash)."

Growing up, all my siblings knew we were no longer little children when we were included in the abstinence menu. When we were made aware that we should fast, then we knew we were adults.

Going meatless, however, wasn't that difficult in my family. Every day we had seafood. Our table always had one meat dish, one fish and one vegetable. This menu was handed down from my grandmother who, even when she ate alone, always had three viands.

It's not difficult to remember which fish was a family favorite, especially for the Lenten season. It was *tinapang banak* (grey mullet) from my lola's Balanga hometown.

> For people who grew up waiting for Good Friday to taste *bacalao* cooked in the Spanish way, the experience is always something to look forward to

Each piece would be about four inches long, golden brown from the smoking. My siblings and I learned how to eat this fish safely by removing the really firm bones near its stomach. In my family, no one will de-bone the fish or crack open a crab for you. If you want to eat, you'd have to do it yourself.

My personalized *tinapa* has a dipping sauce of vinegar mixed in with a bit of fish sauce. Some chopped tomatoes and rice complete the dish.

Good Fridays are supposed to be days of quiet meditation. But it is the best time to travel outside Manila to enjoy traffic-less highways and catch a glimpse now and then of rituals being performed on the road such as men bearing crosses.

It isn't in the spirit of Good Friday but those times have become memorable. You don't have to wonder when I say it's because of what was eaten.

At my friend Chit Lijauco's Santa Rosa, Laguna, home, her mother's cousin, Rosita Adato, showed me how to cook *guinataang hipon* using small, fresh water shrimps (*yapyap*) caught in Laguna Lake. She sauteed the shrimp with *kamias*, waited until almost all the liquid was gone, poured in the coconut milk to simmer until almost dry.

More coconut milk was poured in and left to simmer once more. She cooked it over slow fire, unhurried, making sure that the shrimp absorbed all those flavors. You eat them unpeeled, taking a mouthful with every bite and smiling, thinking to yourself that this is the way food should taste.

Gilda Cordero Fernando once brought me with her also to Laguna, to Lumbang, to witness Good Friday rites there and then to a house in Pakil for lunch. The memorable dish was also freshwater shrimps cooked in *gata* and *kamias*.

Pakil was to be the setting once more for an impromptu lunch to satisfy nephews and nieces hankering for rice after our Good Friday excursion through Laguna. We were told that at the back of the church "The Beatles" was open. The place was also a karaoke joint, hence the name, but that day, it was quiet.

It was a surprise to find Lory Tan, WWF Philippines president, who was taking a lunch break with his crew from recording Lenten rites for the book "Cuaresma."

My family ordered the last pieces of the *guinataang tilapia*. It might have been hunger or the fact that there were very few things to be had but I thought that was the perfect dish on a Good Friday.

Sadly, "The Beatles" is no longer around. I was told that by one of my siblings who went to Pakil recently. I hope we will be as lucky this year discovering some treasure of an eating place when we decide to roam again on a Good Friday "on that long winding road."

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

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Salute to Filipino women

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA SALUTES the Filipino woman this month with a series of activities starting with a two-day cooking demonstration by chefs from the mall's specialty restaurants at the Grand Atrium.

It is supported by Tefal, Beka and McCormick.

Chefs from Cocorama, ClawDaddy and Fish & Co. will be featured March 17, 2-5 p.m. They will use nonstick cookware products of Tefal and McCormick. On March 18, 2-5 p.m., the Center of Culinary Arts (CCA) and De la Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLSU-CSB) share the fundamentals of cooking using products of German cookware maker Beka.

The cooking demo is open to the public. Gifts from Tefal and Beka will be raffled off during the cooking demonstration (Shangri-La Plaza Marketing Dept., tel. 6337851 and website www.shangrila-plaza.com).

Cheesy treats

The Reggie Aspiras School of Culinary Arts offers the following classes:

March 16—Sweet and Savory Cheese Treats—All New!: Savory: Assorted Cheese Sticks, Cheese Crackers, Cheese Cookies, Cheese Puffs Served with Assorted Dips (Pimiento, Fruit Jam etc.) Sweet: "Cheesecake" Cream Puffs with Chocolate Sauce, Créme Brûlèe Cheesecake, Best Ever White Chocolate Oreo Cheesecake.

March 17—Mushrooms—All New!: Cream of Mushroom and Cheese Soup, Apricot Honey Mustard Chicken with Mushroom Risotto, Veal with Mushrooms and Truffles with Garlic Mushroom Pasta, Grilled Steaks with Wild Mushroom Bolognese, Scallop and Shrimp Saute with Mushrooms Over Creamy Garlic Potatoes.

March 19—Trattoria 1—Favorite Italian Restaurant Recipes—All New!: Salad of Mozzarella done two ways: Pan Seared with Roasted Bell Peppers and with Grilled Portabella In Basil Oil. Chicken Roast with Artichokes and Cheese Served with Roasted Tomato and Scampi Pasta; Ribeye Steaks Smothered with Choice of Italian Garlic Butter or Salsa di Gorgonzola with Pan Fried Herb Potatoes, Mascarpone Cheesecake with Balsamic Strawberries.

March 21—Trattoria 2—Favorite Italian Restaurant Recipes—All New!: Bruschetta (Grilled Rustic Bread) done three ways: With Mushrooms and Roasted Garlic, With Mozarella and Basil, Prosciutto Marinara. Lasagna of Prawn in Layers of Black Pasta with a Sun-dried Tomato Seafood Bechamel, Italian Style Tenderloin Tips with Sausage Risotto, Trio of Panna Cotta.

For complete schedule and inquiries, call 9289296 and 9273008.

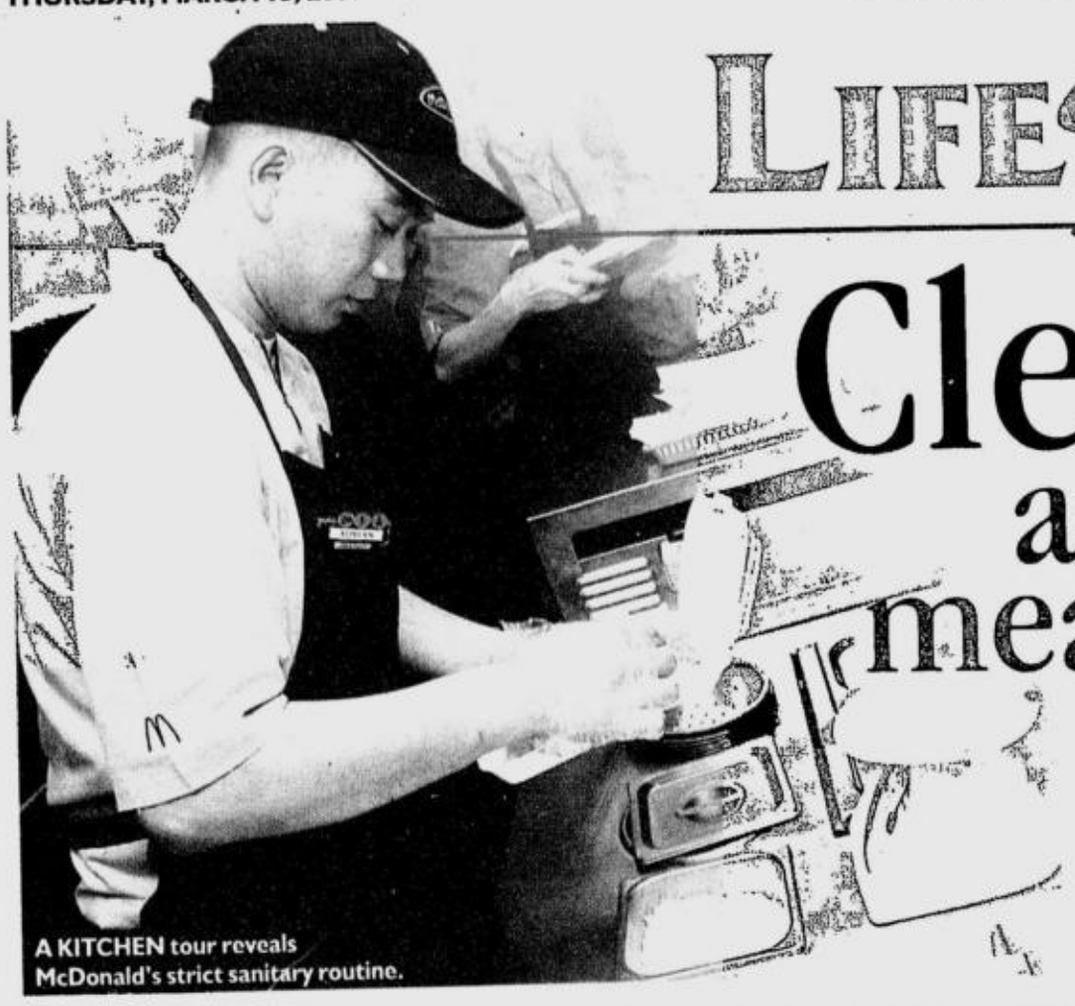
Asian cooking

Maya Kitchen brings an exciting course that explores the basics of cooking and goes on to concentrate on one of the most popular cuisines of Asia: "Chinese Cooking," March 24, 2-6 p.m., will show you how to make your own fantastic Pata Tim, Chinese Lumpia, Siomai, Kikiam, Pork Spareribs with Black Beans, Chinese Stuffed Chicken and Almond Jelly like a professional in the comforts of your own kitchen.

Come and share the cupping class on "Coffee 101 (Barista Class)," March 24, 2-6 p.m. This class gives you background on Coffee History, Coffee Process, Troubleshooting, Machine know-how, proper grinding and techniques to a perfect froth; actual preparation of popular Traditional Hot Coffee Concoction: Espresso doppio, Cappuccino, Latte, Macchiatto; Cold Coffee Concoctions with coffee tasting and snacks.

"Basic Culinary" on March 27-30, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., will prepare you to take control in the kitchen. Learn proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; proper *mise en place* of *mirepoix*, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades; use of herbs and spices combinations; proper purchasing, storage; techniques of disjointing and boning poultry, filleting fish and meat fabrication as well as actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad, eggs, pasta, seafood, poultry and meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation.

Call Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays-Saturdays) at 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City, or call 8921185 or 8925011 local 108. Or send e-mail to mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph.



A KITCHEN tour reveals McDonald's strict sanitary routine.

Clean— and meaning it

McDonald's shows how cleanliness is next to godliness

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

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www.robinsonsmalls.com

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esperas

LET'S ADMIT IT. WE ARE A country fueled by fast food: burgers, fries, fried chicken. They're hot, delicious and easy. And with millions of fast-food meals sold each day, we merely assume they're all clean and safe. But they can be unsafe and, worse, deadly.

You've heard stories here and there about people discovering a worm in the salad, a cockroach in the soda or a sharp metal object in the sandwich. Proven or not, these tales make us cringe and ultimately doubt the sanitation standards in fast-food kitchens.

Around the globe cleanliness and food safety in fast-food chains are much talked about and often debated. With the countless number of fast-food restaurants, keeping food safe and clean can be an enormous and difficult task.

As a result, diners may get sick from the careless ways of the kitchen crew, such as handling ready-to-eat food with unwashed hands, undercooking the meat and mishandling food temperatures.

So how do you know that the food you eat is safe and clean, and the quick-service restaurant is not making short shrift of standards on cleanliness and food quality?

Open Doors Program

The only way to find out is to take a peek into the kitchen. And what establishment would allow you to do that?

McDonald's, in its thrust to promote the brand's promise of food safety, cleanliness and quality, recently opened its kitchen to the public for one day under its Open Doors Program.

Kenneth Yang, president and chief executive officer of McDonald's Philippines, believes food safety is nonnegotiable for every operator in the food service sector.

"Open Doors Program started in McDonald's Australia and China," Yang said. "This was our way of telling people that we care about them and their families. We opened our kitchens to show just how thoughtfully each meal is made, under the best and most caring condition."

Maintaining consistency of quality and service within a chain of fast-food restaurants really takes constant vigilance. McDonald's restaurant managers are trained to under-

CLEAN/ D4

KENNETH Yang, president and CEO of McDonald's Philippines

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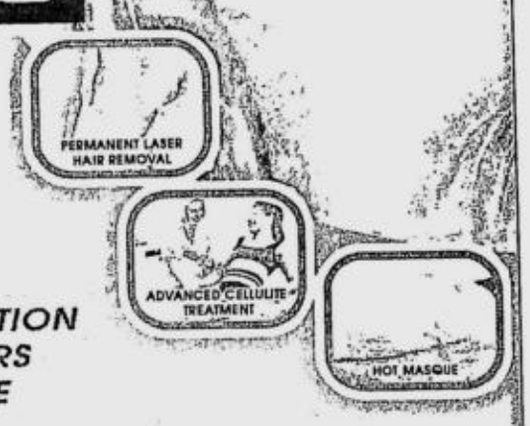

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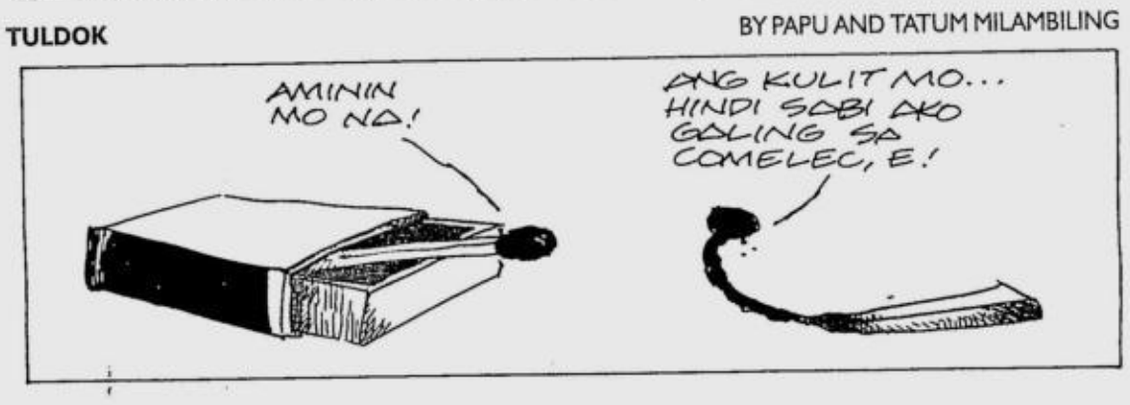
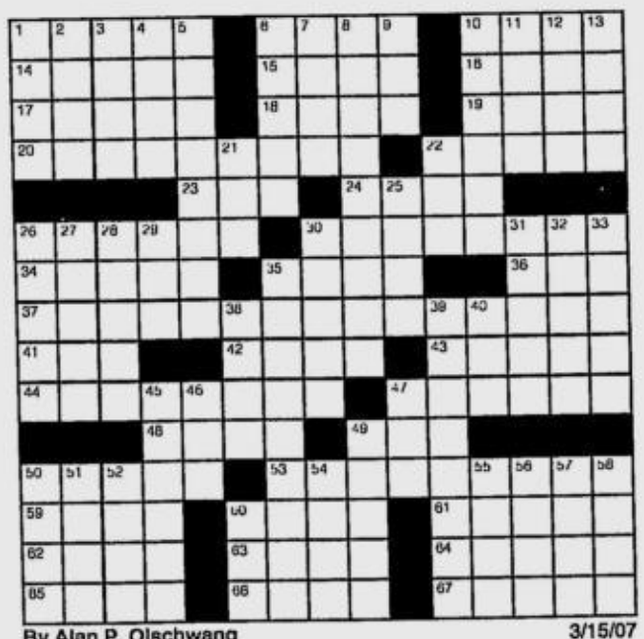


BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

3/15/07

ACROSS
1 Raptor's dive
6 Diarist Frank
10 Charlie Brown expletive
14 Leg bone
15 Windfall
16 List add-on
17 Bikini, e.g.
18 Elec. units
19 Golfer Isao
20 Start of Evan Esar quip
22 Called strikes, for short
23 West of films
24 Yorkshire river
26 Cremona violins
30 Despised
34 Thermoplastic resin
35 Citizens' rights org.
36 Styled after
37 Part 2 of quip
41 Sea eagle
42 Throaty break-in
43 Ecological region
44 Thought through
47 Brezhnev of Russia
48 Adam's garden
49 Go bad
50 Sock hop
53 End of quip
59 Smell
60 Highlander
61 Massenet work
62 Use as authority
63 Nursery rhyme starter
64 Rajah's wives
65 Proofreader's save
66 Lacking color
67 Glossy

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2 Including
3 Orchestra instrument
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5 Trigger, e.g.
6 Lessen
7 Alaska port
8 Piece of cake!
9 USNA grad
10 Hole enlarger
11 Upon
12 Appropriate
13 Finished a steel
21 Some scale tones
22 Mil. welfare org.
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26 Fall bloomer
27 Olympic skier Phil
28 Stage type
29 __ Mahal
30 Suffered with dull pains
31 Heaviest of the noble gases
32 Varnish ingredient
33 Took the plunge
35 Plato and Socrates
38 Ruination
39 Inciters
40 Carnival city
45 Clandestine
46 Poetic piece
47 __ Alamos
49 The Hoosier Poet
50 Medics
51 Mine entrance
52 Memo
54 Software support
55 Fiery gemstone
56 Kelly of Hollywood
57 New York canal
58 Chore
60 Tibetan gazelle

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	T	E	M		F	L	A	G		E	V	A	D	E
L	A	N	I		L	A	M	E		P	E	L	E	E
E	C	O	L		E	R	I	N		I	N	T	E	L
W	I	L	L	A	N	D	G	R	A	C	E			
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S	P	O	O	R		O	D	I	E		E	N	I	D
P	A	S	T	A		P	O	L	S		D	O	T	S

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3/15/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You enthusiastically pursue your goals. You like to achieve and climb the ladder of success. In fact, sometimes quite literally, you like to climb or reach great heights. Your charming enthusiasm and charisma make you very attractive to others. This year you will wrap up something you've been involved with for the past nine years in order to move on to something new.
Birthdate of: Eva Longoria, actress; David Silverman, animator; Alan Bean, astronaut.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a good day to learn something new, especially anything related to studying philosophy, religion or politics. Make travel plans. If you work in publishing, you can accomplish a lot as well.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You see very clearly how to divide something or deal with shared property and your obligations to others today. You have a good understanding of both sides of the picture.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Now is the time to mend broken fences with others. You have a grasp of whatever you're dealing with. You see things from the point of view of both parties.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): What a productive day at work! You find it easy to establish a rhythm. You'll find practical solutions to problems. You have clarity of purpose today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): For once, your creative urges are in sync with a desire to accomplish something through hard work. Artists and people working with children will be very productive today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): While you deal with everyday concerns at home, your mind is very much on long-range goals. You see the big picture today. You know what you want to get done.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is an excellent day for long-range plans. Your thinking is optimistic and confident, yet you're also very realistic about what can be done.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): "There's money in them thar hills!" You have excellent financial know-how today. Even if your head is in the sky, your feet are on the ground. Trust your judgment.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might play a parental role with someone today. You feel you have the wherewithal to take care of someone who is in need.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you work with others today, you'll accomplish something practical and solid. Aside from that, you'll prefer your own company. (You have a lot to think about.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're very philosophical about whatever happens today, even if you encounter setbacks. You have positive thoughts, and you're very down to earth. (This is a winning combination.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Everything related to your career and your good name among your peers is blessed today. Whatever choices you make will be solid and balanced.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

3						2	6	8
2				1				
4			3	9				
						1		
	9	4		2		3	7	
		3						
				5	9			2
				7				4
7	4	8						1

Difficulty Level ★★★

3/15

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	1	9	6	2	8	3	4	5
8	6	5	7	4	3	2	1	9
2	3	4	9	1	5	7	6	8
1	7	6	4	8	9	5	3	2
3	5	8	2	7	1	4	9	6
4	9	2	5	3	6	8	7	1
6	4	7	1	5	2	9	8	3
5	8	1	3	9	4	6	2	7
9	2	3	8	6	7	1	5	4

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/14

THE CONSUMER

Environmentalist finds kindred souls in supermarket

By Linda B. Bolido

NIMFA DOROTEO-CAMUA HAS MADE A pleasant discovery. She found out there was an establishment that shared her concern for the environment.

Here's her story:

"Being an environmentalist, I make it a point to recycle grocery bags when I go to the wet market in Marikina. At the Robinsons Metro East Supermarket, I told the cashier and bagger to put all my purchases in old Robinsons plastic bags which I brought.

"Both smiled and said Robinsons had been encouraging shoppers to bring their old plastic bags for reuse when doing the grocery. However, they had been disappointed because people ignored the notice [posted] at the cashier counters.

"May I commend Wilson, the bagger, and Cecille, the cashier, as well as Ruby Rose Maniquiz, the cashiering supervisor, for being environment-conscious and for their excellent customer service?

"To address the problem of plastic bags and its effect on the environment, perhaps Robinsons can provide some sort of incentive to shoppers who bring their old plastic bags when doing the grocery [or even when] shopping [at the department store].

"The attitude of the staff of the supermarket about plastic bags is greatly encouraging. I hope to see more people like them not only in the malls but even in ordinary stores."

Camua's decision to reuse the plastic bags brings me to another story.

Environmental pact

A group of friends in San Francisco decided in 2005 to mind their Rs—reduce, reuse, recycle.

According to a report by M. P. Dunleavey in The New York Times, over dinner, a group of friends started discussing the damage done to the environment by consumer excess.

The group "ended up challenging one another to not buy anything new for six months."

By mid-2006, the informal group had become Compact and it had built a groundswell of supporters, even in Europe and Australia.

The latest estimate is 8,000 members just in the United States.

John Perry, co-founder of Compact, told the Times that what made their group different was they aimed not just "to scale back financially but to reduce the environmental toll of the American consumer lifestyle."

Compact members, the Times reported, reuse or recycle what they had and bought only used or second-hand goods.

The only things they buy fresh or brand new are food, health-related products and personal things like underwear. They are also free "to spend as much as you like on life's more intangible pleasures, like sports or music."

Dunleavey quoted Compact member Marlaina Abbott-Ross of Charleston, South Carolina, as saying, "It's about mindful consumerism, not about depriving ourselves."

Abbott-Ross was reportedly a nonstop shopper before she saw the light. She said packages would arrive from eBay and she could not even remember what she ordered.

From being overwhelmed by the clutter, bills and stuff she did not need, her new philosophy has not only saved her cash but lessened her stress, too.

For many people, it was not just the savings financially that they appreciated. Many members said the best dividend they gained was time.

Bridget Stuart of Laguna Beach, California, said she was playing tennis once again. "I used to play tennis all the time, and the biggest thing that supplanted it was shopping."

A Compact member only since December, Stuart told the Times she now had more time to invite friends over for dinner, to play board games and take walks with her children.

That indicates just how much of her time was taken up by malling.

Feedback

We thank the Department of Trade and Industry and Manuel Antonio, vice president/head of the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) Tollway Management Division, for acting on the complaint of reader Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc of Makati City.

Her car broke down at the South Luzon Expressway and she was asked to pay by the towing crew what she felt was an exorbitant fee.

In her latest e-mail, she said Antonio wrote to apologize for the incident. The PNCC official told her he would direct the towing company to penalize the concerned crew.

Graduate culinary school teaches passion for cooking

AT THE ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL Culinary Arts (AICA), aspiring chefs face a day that begins at 6 a.m. and won't end till 10 at night. On any given day, the students must prepare breakfast for 40 people and, with barely enough breathing space, repair back to their pots and pans for a five-course lunch that will serve another 40.

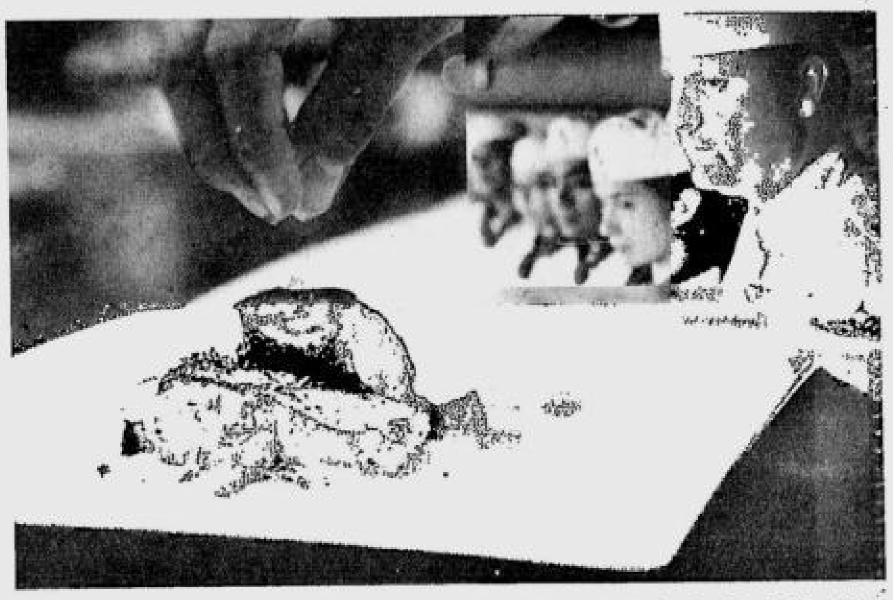
"It's easy to cook good food, but it's not so easy to cook good food for 40 people," said Swedish chef Mats Loo, 37, who heads AICA's Master's Diploma Course in Culinary Arts, the first ever culinary master's program in the Philippines. During the nine-month diploma program in International Culinary Arts and Professional Kitchen Management, students learn the ropes.

"Cooking is not about working but about passion," Loo said. For someone who cut his teeth—or sharpened his knives—at Hallstahammar in Sweden, an industrial town that had "one kebab shop and one pizzeria," Loo knows about passion only too well. He began working at age 14 while still in school, working two nights a week at a local pub before he was deemed fit to do kitchen work—"peeling onions."

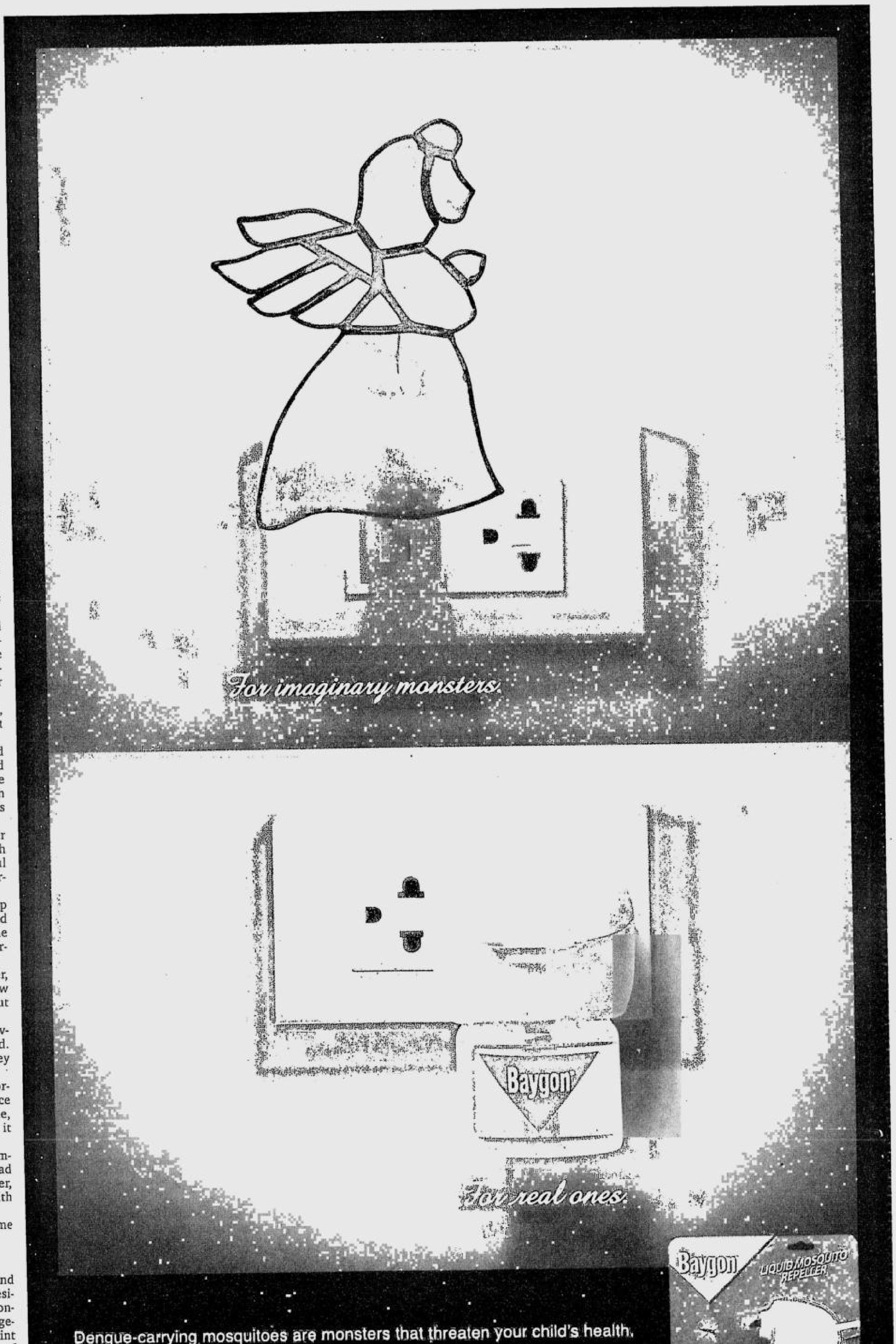
Leaving school at age 19, Loo built his culinary career in European capitals like Stockholm and London before spending the last 12 years as an executive chef in a cruise ship.

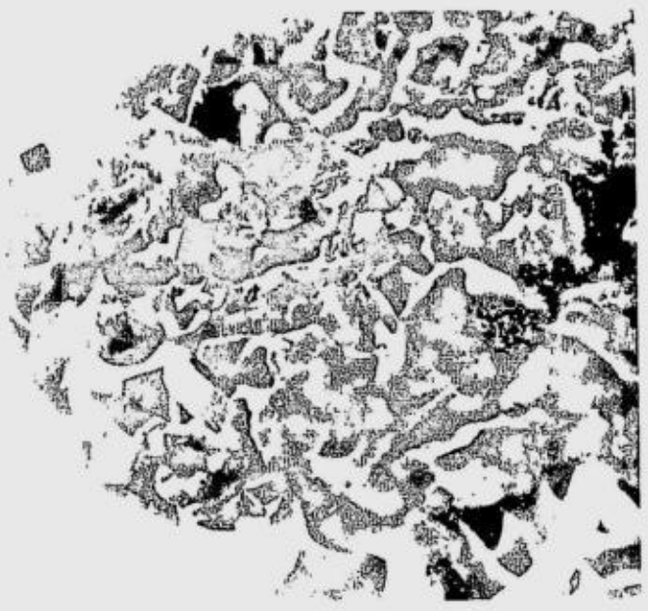
While teaching is a first for him—he presides over a class of 10-12 students only—Loo brings with him not only the exacting standards he learned as a professional chef, he is also eager to impart the value that being a chef is not just a profession but a "way of living."

Chef and AICA co-owner Rob Pengson called the AICA curriculum "the Ferrari of culinary programs." AICA not only gets students ready to work in international restaurants, it also expects them to "be better" and make a real difference in the food they prepare and the service they offer, Pengson said.



The Academy of International Culinary Arts is located near the Valle Verde Country Club at 2/F, Sky Way Towers, Capt. Henry P. Javier St., Pasig City. Visit www.aicaculinary.com; e-mail aicachef@yahoo.com; or call 6722119 and 6722271.





LEMON Chicken Lollies (above) and Roast Beef Pasta

Home-cooked party fare for the graduates

HERE'S A TOAST TO THE graduates. Make a blast of a graduation party with these recipes from San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center as they celebrate a milestone in their lives. Delicious fare suggestions include Stuffed Tomatoes, Luncheon Meat three-ways, Roast Beef Pasta and Lemon Chicken Lollies, all so easy to prepare when hosting a memorable bash.

For more recipes and tips to prepare a variety of dishes, log on to www.mygreatfood.com.

Lemon Chicken Lollies

½ k Magnolia Chicken Station Chicken Lollipops
2 pc egg
4 tsp Purefoods Supremo Cane Vinegar
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
½ c cornstarch
1 c Magnolia Nutri-oil (Palm Olein)

Lemon Glaze:

5 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp ginger, finely chopped
2 tsp lemon peel, cut into thin slices
6 tbsp water
½ c sugar
4 tsp cornstarch

Mix the egg, vinegar, salt, pepper and cornstarch with the chicken lollipops. Set aside to marinate for at least 10 minutes.

Deep fry chicken in preheated oil until golden brown.

To make the sauce: Combine all the ingredients in a small saucepan. Let simmer on low heat until slightly thickened and sauce clears up. Dip chicken lollipops in the sauce. Serve immediately.

Makes eight servings.

Roast Beef Pasta

220 g uncooked fettuccine
500 g Monterey Beef, sukiyaki cut
¼ tsp salt
pinch pepper
¼ c Magnolia Gold Butter

Gravy sauce:

¼ c Magnolia Gold Butter
¼ c flour
1 pc red bell pepper, diced
2 c beef broth
1 tsp liquid seasoning

Topping:

Magnolia Cheddar Cheese, grated
parsley, chopped

Cook fettuccine according to package directions. Set aside. Season beef with salt and pepper then lightly fry in butter. Set aside.

To make gravy sauce: Melt butter in a saucepan. Whisk in the flour making sure no lumps are formed. Add in the bell pepper and cook for a minute. Gradually add the beef broth then simmer until slightly thickened. Add in the beef together with its juices and let simmer with the gravy sauce for 5 minutes over low heat. Adjust seasoning according to taste.

Pour over the pasta. Serve hot topped with grated cheese or fresh chopped parsley.

Serves two.

Stuffed Tomatoes

125 g potatoes, boiled and diced
100 g carrots, boiled and diced
125 g crab sticks, cubed
2 tbsp green peas
125 g Magnolia Chicken Station Breast Fillet, boiled and shredded
½ c lettuce, thinly sliced
¼ c Magnolia Cheddar Cheese, diced
½ c mayonnaise
2 tbsp mustard
Salt
White pepper
7 pc fresh tomatoes, blanched, peeled, seeded and sliced into quarters

Mix the first seven ingredients. Mix mayonnaise and mustard. Season with salt and pepper. Mix into the potato mixture. Stuff the mixture onto the tomato slices. Garnish with chopped parsley.

Makes 28 pieces.

Your personality in a coffee cup

STARBUCKS CUSTOMERS ARE WELCOME to discover their unique drink, to enhance their Starbucks experience and to indulge in their own personalized beverage by customizing their drinks.

"Starbucks beverages are handcrafted, which means our baristas can make your drink any way you want," said Ding Bustaliño, head of marketing. "It can be tailored to reflect your personality or mood, just like how a piece of clothing can show off your personal style. By having fun and experimenting with different options, you can capture your personal taste and express your individuality."

There are hundreds of beverage possibilities to be discovered given the numerous options and modifiers that customers may choose from. Offerings include: flavored syrups created exclusively for Starbucks, and beverage modifiers, such as soy milk, nonfat milk, or an additional espresso shot which can be specified to suit your personality in popular drinks, such as a Caffé Latte, Caffé Mocha or a Cappuccino.

This season, Starbucks is also introducing delicious reduced-fat loaf cakes in blueberry walnut and orange-pineapple, as well as a reduced-fat strawberry cheesecake and a reduced-fat oven-roasted turkey chicken sandwich.

COFFEE passion at Starbucks

Iced tea alternatives

SOLA IS A PREMIUM brand of iced tea. Launched more than six years ago, Sola offers a healthier beverage alternative—iced tea that has more taste and less sugar.

Sola now becomes an even better alternative with its new products: Sola Jasmine Green Tea and Sola Lemon Green Tea. A refreshing brew of natural green tea and fruit extracts, the Sola Lemon Green Tea contains real green tea and lemon extracts, while the Sola Jasmine Green Tea offers a hint of Jasmine flower, a type of tea flavor popular in China.

Sola's new line of green iced tea contains antioxidants called catechins that help prevent or reduce the chances of cancer and can aid in lowering blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

The delicate balance of green tea, fruit flavors and sugar is what differentiates Sola Iced Green Tea from the rest. Sola Iced Green Tea only contains 16 grams of sugar per serving, way below other beverages which contain substantially more sugar and calories.

The Sola line of iced teas is available in all leading supermarkets, convenience stores, restaurants and cafés nationwide. Call 4126123-25; e-mail sola@greendot.com; visit www.solaicedtea.com.

At the Academy of International Culinary Arts

Swedish chef presides over the "Ferrari of culinary programs"

It's Hell Week at the Academy of International Culinary Arts. For the next seven days, future chefs face a day that begins at 6 am and won't end till 10 at night. The routine is, there is no routine. On any given day, the students can expect to prepare breakfast for 40 people and, with barely enough breathing space, repair back to their pots and pans for a five-course lunch that will serve another 40.

"It's easy to cook good food, but it's not so easy to cook good food for 40 people," says Chef Mats Loo, 37, a strapping Swede who heads AICA's Master's Diploma Course in Culinary Arts, the first-ever culinary master's program in the Philippines.

During the nine month diploma program in International Culinary Arts & Professional Kitchen Management, students do learn the scary ropes. With aplomb. While keeping the kitchen spotlessly clean when they're done. And with plenty of good humor left to spare.

"Cooking is not about working but about passion," Chef Mats pronounces. For someone who cut his teeth – or sharpened his knives – at Hallstahammar in Sweden, an industrial town Chef Mats remembers as having "one kebab shop and one pizzeria," he knows about passion only too well. He began working at age 14 while still in school, working two nights a week at a local pub before he was deemed fit to do kitchen work "peeling onions."

Leaving school at age 19, Chef Mats built his culinary career in European capitals like Stockholm and London before spending the last 12 years as an Executive Chef in a cruise ship.

While teaching is a first for him – he presides over a class of between 10 to 12 students only – he brings with him not only the exacting standards he learned as a professional chef, he is also eager to impart the value that being a chef is not just a profession but a "way of living."

He gives great store on punctuality ("Our classes begin two minutes before eight") and abides by the showbiz dictum of "the show must go on." In fact, he remembers punching in for work as he hobbled around in the kitchen "in crutches and with my hand wrapped in bandages."

While that may sound tough, it simply goes to the heart of AICA's purpose of what co-owner Chef Rob Pengson calls "the Ferrari of culinary programs." AICA not only gets students ready to work in international restaurants, it also expects them to "be better" and make a real difference in the food they prepare and the service they offer.

During Hell Week, which occurs on the sixth month of the nine month program, the students break for a quick lunch. They look tired but exuberant, talking above each other and forking a pasta dish they prepared earlier. In a few minutes, they will head back to the kitchen to prep four different fiddly canapés they're serving for 80 people expected to attend an art opening later in the evening. They've never looked happier.

The Academy of International Culinary Arts is located near the Valle Verde Country Club at the 2nd floor Sky Way Towers, Capt. Henry P. Javier St., Pasig City. For inquiries on their masteral, diploma and certificate courses, visit www.aicaculinary.com Email aicachef@yahoo.com or call 672-2119 and 672-2271.

FOR 25 years, McDonald's has seriously adhered to food quality, safety and cleanliness.

Clean–and meaning it

From page D1

stand food preparation in addition to keeping their finances in order and maintaining high standards of cleanliness and fast service.

"Cleanliness is not just the absence of dirt, but the absence of disease-causing bacteria in the area," said Margot Torres, McDonald's vice president for marketing. "With this Open Doors Program, we gave our customers a special privilege to look behind the scenes and to understand the little things that we do in order to make sure we meet the kind of service they expect of us."

One-day affair

McDonald's conducted a tour of its kitchens for pre-selected moms and their families and friends, and some show-biz celebrities. The tour took place simultaneously in selected outlets nationwide: Laoag, Ilocos Norte; Lepanto, Quezon Avenue; Las Piñas; Sucat, Parañaque; Palanyag, Cebu; North Road, Cebu; Binondo, Manila; Lacson Road, Bacolod; Lucao, Pangasinan; Gapan Road, Olongapo; and SM Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The guests were shown McDonald's six different stations, starting with the hand-washing station, which is the first step toward food safety. They also had a glimpse of the salad station, where the super salad meal is prepared.

Guests witnessed how McDonald's comes up with its famous Chicken Mcdo from breading to frying. They also got to inspect the grill area, where Big Mac, Double Cheeseburger and Quarter Pounder are cooked.

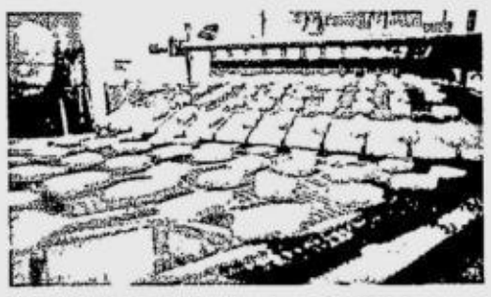
Guests were also presented the production calling station, where all orders are placed and food products are kept warm and fresh. Lastly, they were toured around the French fries station, the most popular station of all.

After the tour, every guest realized how serious McDonald's is in implementing proper hygiene and sanitation practices.

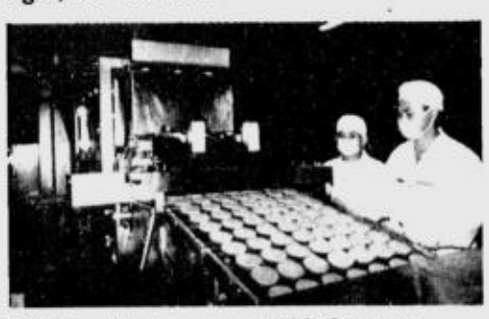
They couldn't believe that McDo crew members wash their hands with warm running water, using specially formulated antimicrobial soap, every hour, and apply hand sanitizer every 30 minutes; that they wear different gloves during different stages of food preparation; that they use color-coded spatulas for preparing raw and cooked eggs to prevent contamination; that they have at least 72 towels in rotation inside the store and these towels are placed in selected food preparation areas for hassle-free cleanup; and that they use color-coded sanitized towels as well as a sanitizer spray bottle to clean tables and in-store fixtures.

Love it or hate it, fast food is a part of our lives. At least at McDonald's, you're assured that what you eat and feed your family is safe, clean and prepared under strict supervision.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph



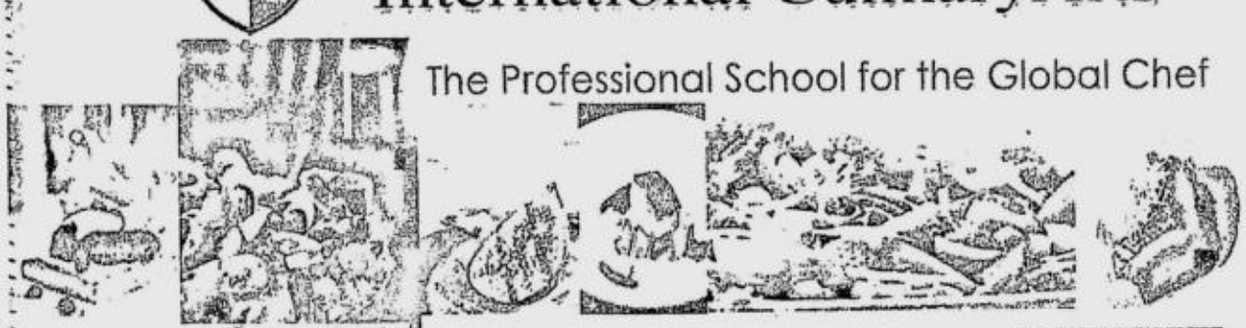
MCDONALD'S goes by the rule, "If it's not right, don't serve it."



FOOD safety is nonnegotiable for every operator in the food service industry.

The Academy for International Culinary Arts

The Professional School for the Global Chef



Master's Diploma In Culinary Arts

The AICA Master's Diploma in Culinary Arts gives you the ability to further better your professional repertoire and makes you more eligible for employment opportunities here and abroad. This course is headed by *Swedish International Executive Chef Mats Valdemar Loo* and is available in 8 weeks and 1 week durations. Classes opens: March 20 - June 19, 2007.

Foie Gras & Appetizers (For Professionals Only)
Learn how to clean, prepare and apply various cooking methods to foie gras as well as other contemporary appetizers with AICA's masters program.
Class open: March 20 – 23, 2007

Diploma In International Culinary Arts Management

AICA's Diploma in International Culinary Arts Management allows you to begin a promising career towards becoming an Executive Chef . AICA offers a 9-month course packed with quality instruction at just the right time and duration. In addition to providing the finest education and training in the country, the Academy goes one step above the rest by playing an active role in the placement and employment of its students.
Classes opens : June 5 and July 10, 2007.

Fundamentals of Professional Cooking

AICA's Fundamentals of Professional Cooking will train you into becoming a very confident cook in a professional and recreational manner. The 16-session course allows you to produce any recipe imaginable and is available in weekday and weekend schedules.
Class opens: April 10, 2007

For all courses mentioned above, please call the school for tuition fee details and other information. There are only 14 slots in each batch so applicants are urged to register immediately.

Suite 207 Skyway Twin Towers, 51 Capt. Henry Javier St. Pasig City Tel. 672-2119 / 672-2271 Website www.aicaculinary.com Email aicachef@yahoo.com

SEAFOOD *paella*, also known among some Filipinos as *arroz a la Valenciana*

Yes, they really have Arroz a la Valenciana in Spain

Like 'puto,' restaurants and food stalls prepare *paella* in large pans but sell in small portions

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

IT IS ALL RIGHT TO ASK about *Arroz a la Valenciana* in Valencia, Spain.

Unlike in China where your search for *lumpiang* Shanghai or *pancit* Canton is likely to be met with blank faces, many Valencians are likely to know immediately what you are talking about.

Now generally known by the generic name *paella*, some people say Valencians invented the rice dish that has become a mainstay of celebratory meals in the Philippines.

In the Mediterranean city, *paella*, in all sorts of variations, is standard daily fare. Like *puto*, restaurants and food stalls prepare large batches of *paella* and scoop a portion depending on how many people order it.

Valencia being a coastal city, seafood *paella* is, of course, the best-known. But *arroz Valenciana* can also be made with vegetables, meat, poultry and rabbit, among others.

Rice is, needless to say, the chief ingredient. While Filipinos tend to overload the dish with the other ingredients, leaving very little room for rice, *arroz Valenciana* is primarily that—rice.

An order may come with one large piece or two smaller pieces of chicken but everything else is rice and some vegetables, making for a very filling meal that often makes it unneces-

YES THEY/ E2

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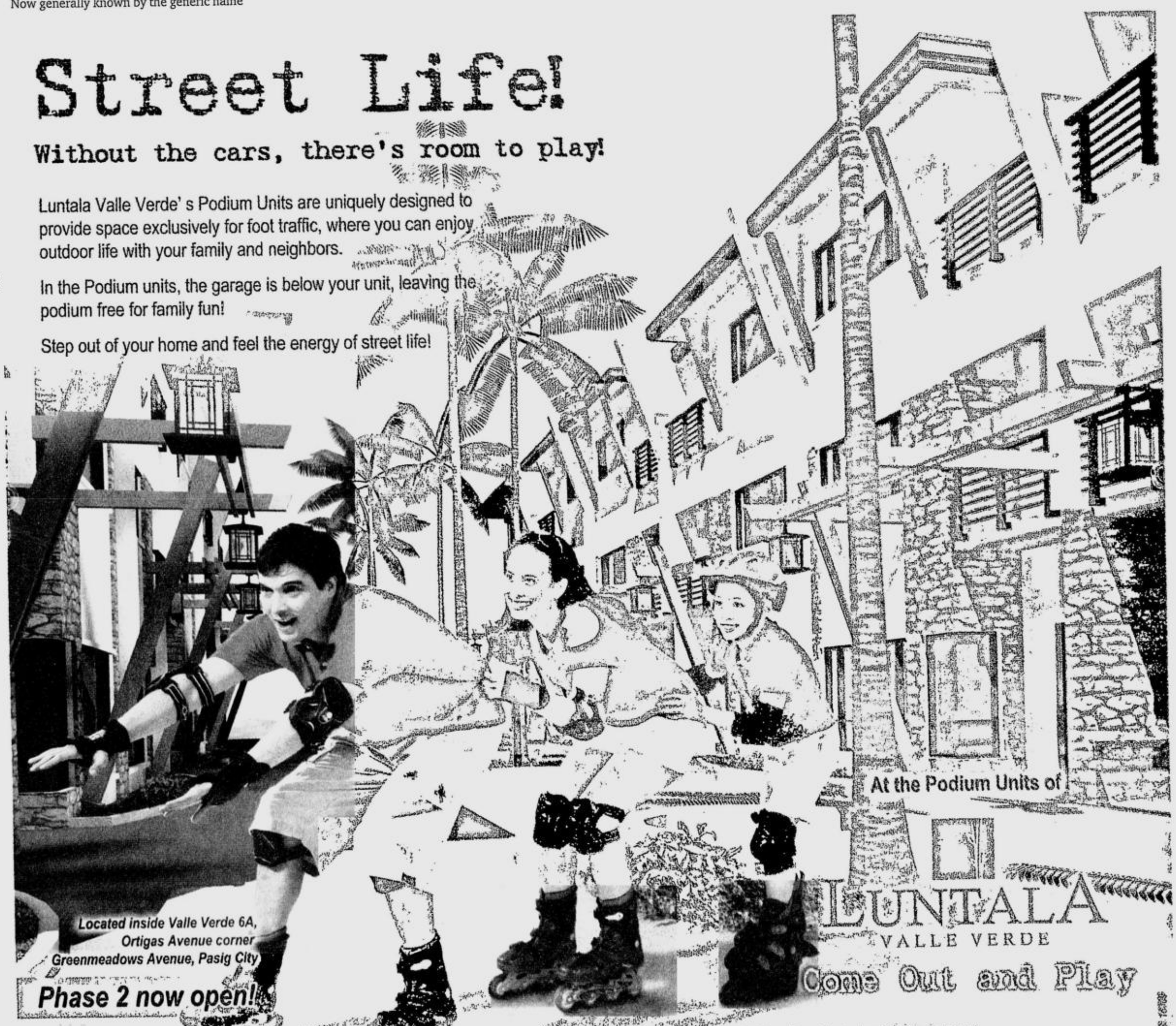

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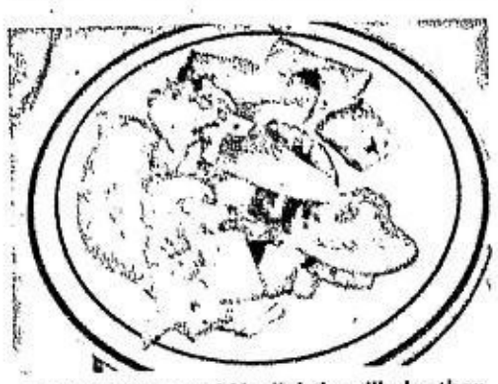
Ken Done

Some works of art are truly moving.

BMW Art Cars on tour / 03.06.07-03.31.07 / AYALA MUSEUM, MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES

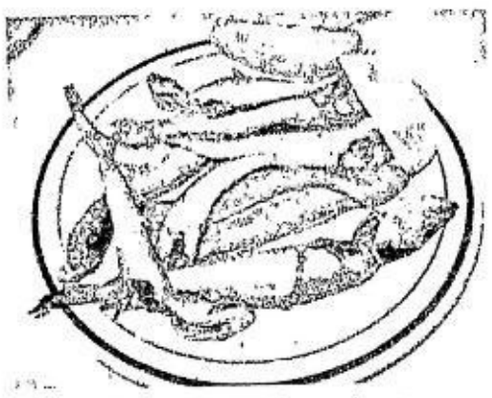
BMW Art Car by Ken Done.

Initiated by

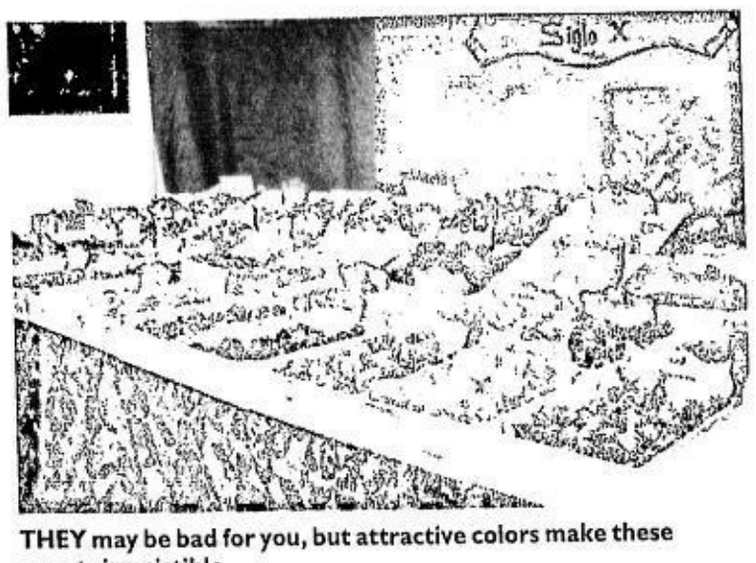


CALAMARE or squid is slightly grilled rather than fried and served with a wedge of lemon.

TINY clams, served as a tapa, look like the native tulya.



PESCADITOS or little fish, another tapa



THEY may be bad for you, but attractive colors make these sweets irresistible.

Yes, they really have Arroz a la Valenciana in Spain

From page E1

sary to have other dishes.

Pan-tastic

But Valencia *paella* also comes in all sizes. You only have to visit market stalls to see just how many sizes of the rice dish are available. *Paella* pans, from saucer-sized to something as big as a baby's bath basin, are arrayed like thin gongs.

If Valencians are not bashful about claiming credit for *paella*, they are equally eager to let visitors know just how Valencia orange got its name, not by word but simply by making sure they do not miss it wherever they go.

Orchards planted to the citrus are among the first things a visitor sees from the airport. In parks and roadsides, the oranges, many trees still heavy with fruits in late autumn, stand proudly beside ornamental plants.

Of course, Valencia, like any other part of Spain, is also about wine, *jamon*, cheese, and other delicacies. Spanish food, which Filipinos have come to know and still love even centuries after the Spaniards have left the archipelago, is easily a major tourist attraction.

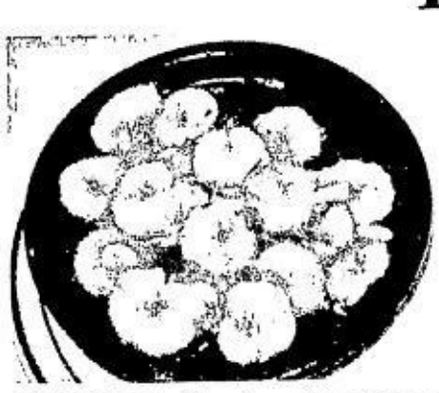
One place near the cathedral has made brisk business for years—and has become, in fact, almost a landmark—serving primarily *churros con chocolate*. At any time of day, the modest two-story place, tucked in a quiet, narrow lane off the Plaza de la Reina fronting the cathedral, is filled with people eager to taste the newly cooked, buttery, ridged and twisted *churros* paired with thick, rich hot chocolate.

Bullring flea market

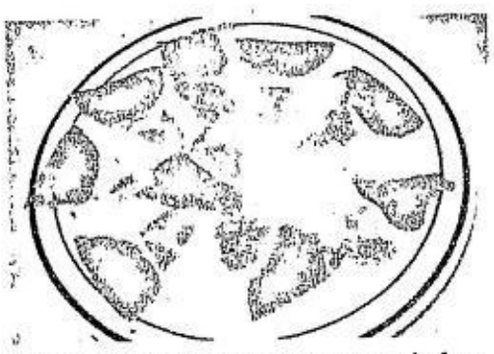
The outer portion of the bullring is filled with stalls that sell freshly baked bread, candies, *helado* (ice cream) and others, as well as clothes and other curiosities. On some Sunday evenings, the inside of the bullring becomes a flea market. People in costumes sell a wide range of goods from pickled fruits and vegetables to medicinal potions.

But the place to go to if you are interested in food, or simply a tourist eager to see everything Valencia has to offer, is the Central Market. Though the beautiful old building may not be particularly photogenic for a while as a major renovation has covered its façade in steel beams and wooden planks, inside is a visual delight—hams and sausages hang from overhead hooks, blocks of cheese and nuts are displayed in glass shelves and vegetables and fruits in technicolor fill display racks.

There are purple broccoli, lettuce in all its variations, red and white radish, and a lot more. Though the fresh produce are not the kinds of things you can bring home as *pasalubong*, the Central Market is definitely a must-see in Valencia.

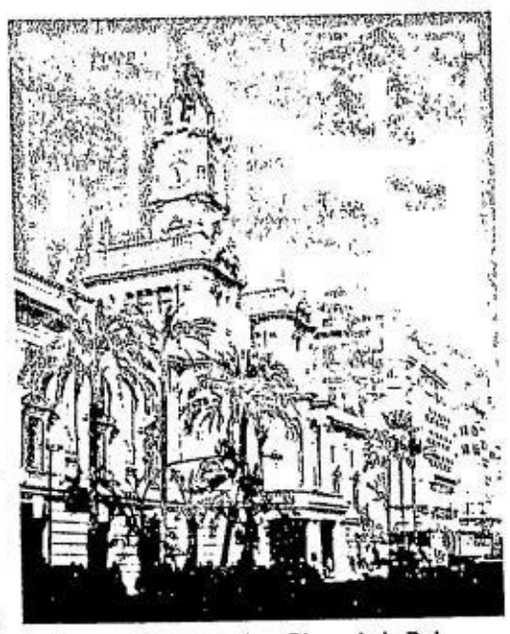


SWIMMING in olive oil, gambas aren't quite like what Filipino restaurants serve.

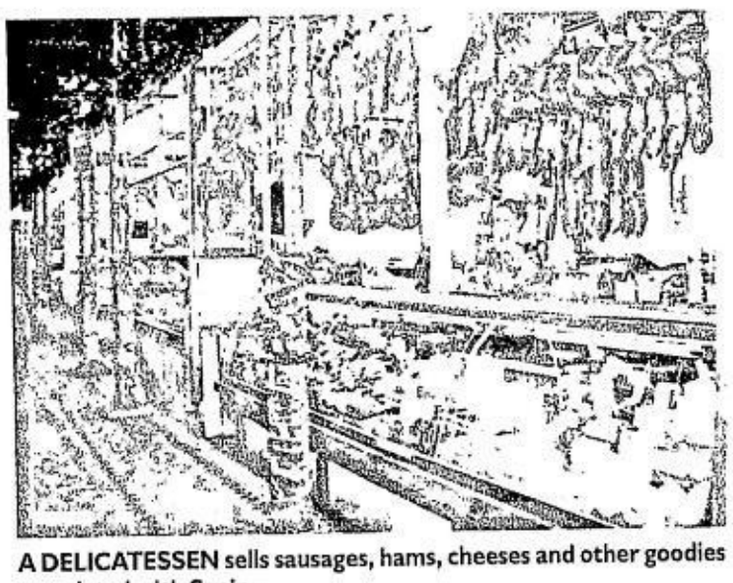


HAM is among several tapas one gets before a meal. Though tapas translate into snacks, they are often more like appetizers.

A BREAD vendor in a weekend tiangge sells breads, puddings and pies.



VALENCIA cathedral on Plaza de la Reina



A DELICATESSEN sells sausages, hams, cheeses and other goodies associated with Spain.

The disappearing tradition of the 'tinungbo'

By Engracia Q. Bangaoil

Editor's Note: The last of the six winners in last year's Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Awards, this essay was written by Engracia Q. Bangaoil, a lawyer now pursuing a doctorate degree at University of the Philippines Diliman. The 'tinungbo' is an Ilocano rice delicacy cooked in bamboo tubes and made during the period after the harvest in November and Christmas, a period called Panagdadaton or Thanksgiving.

THE AUTHOR

WHEN WE WERE CHILdren a long time ago, in that valley where the legend Lam-ang lived his adventures, there was an interregnum between the harvest time of rice in November and Christmas time in December called Panagdadaton.

Roughly translated as "Offering Time" or "Thanksgiving," this was the time when members of the community brought before the church altar a part of their harvest—rice, chicken, fruits and vegetables. The observance was marked by the physically taxing preparation of a rice delicacy cooked in bamboo tubes called *tinungbo* or *tinubong* a day or two before the offering mass on a Sunday.

Laborious

The laborious making of this rice delicacy itself symbolized the toil of the community by which they produced the bounty that the people were offering to their god. Thus, a tube or two of *tinungbo* would accompany the *daton* (offering). Meanwhile, those unable to make *tinungbo* could prepare other kinds of "*kakanin*."

The main ingredient is *diket* or sticky rice, pure or mixed with ordinary rice, depending on one's taste or the availability of *diket*. Pure *diket* would make very sticky *tinungbo*. The rice should be pounded into powder using the *al-o* (pestle) and the *alsong* (mortar), or ground by the stone *gilingan*.

The other main ingredient is coconut milk extracted from desiccated mature coconuts, or the grated meat of young coconuts or *buko*.

Tinungbo using coconut milk would last longer than those that had used grated coconut meat. The mixture would be sweetened with grated or melted *tagapulot* (brown sugar cake) or *bulisangsang* (muscovado). Slowly add water as you mix the rice powder, coconut milk or meat, and raw cane sugar to form a loose paste.

The bamboo tubes must be prepared from segments of the fresh or green (not dry) bolo variety (not the *kawayan* variety) bamboo that are free from any defect or holes. The mouth of each tube must be cut in a tapered manner to allow for the expansion of the cooking mixture.

To close the mouth of the tubes, stoppers must be made from banana leaves that have been passed over fire (to soften them and make them flexible). Pour enough of the mixture inside the tube, up to one half or three-fourths of the tube only, and close the mouth with the banana-leaf stoppers.

Two ways

There are two ways to cook the *tinungbo*. The usual way is to dig a pit, fill the pit with dry woods and burn these until they turn into live charcoal. Arrange the filled bamboo tubes over the mouth of the pit, with the longer part of the tapered mouth facing the sky. The tubes must be constantly turned to ensure equal cooking and the distribution of the coconut meat (if such is used).

When the bamboo becomes dull green, or has cracked, open one tube to taste and see whether the rice delicacy is cooked. If you want crusty *tinungbo*, allow the tube to burn a little. Warning, though, this delicacy using pure *diket* and cooked till crusty would be quite hard and chewy when it gets cold.

The other way of cooking this delicacy would be to use a sufficient pile of rice husks. Bury the tubes in the pile and burn the husks. Make sure that the rice husks on top and below the tubes are burnt to ensure even cooking. Observe the same procedure above.

Tinungbo is best eaten when cold. To make eating easier, cut the tube into two (crosswise). Then cut one half-tube into two or four segments. The color of the delicacy ranges from golden to deep honey, depending on the color of the *tagapulot* or *bulisangsang*, and the length of roasting. The *tinungbo* can last up to a week. However, those using grated coconut meat must be eaten within two days as cooked coconut meat spoils easily.

Almost lost

The tradition of the *tinungbo* has nearly disappeared as Church traditions have changed to accommodate the easier lifestyle of today. The symbolic meaning of the Pinagdadaton has also been lost as more families in the community today have come to depend more and more on the money sent by a parent, a sibling or a child working abroad.

Likewise, young people nowadays spurn farming as a way of living. Even the spirit of giving thanks to God who has made man's toil fruitful has become so rare in a society that expects to take without giving back.

Incidentally, rice is no longer harvested only in November since science and technology have made rice planting easier, shorter, to be done at any time of the year.

Even the celebration of our Savior's birth has so mutated that everything and everybody are remembered except the birthday celebrator Himself. Still, I find myself craving for *tinungbo* whenever I feel the coldness of the approaching Christmas season in my bones.

The laborious making of the rice delicacy is a symbol of the toil of the people to produce God's bounty

How do you like your chocolate?

WHEN IT COMES TO CHOCOLATES, people are at a loss on which to prefer, white or dark?

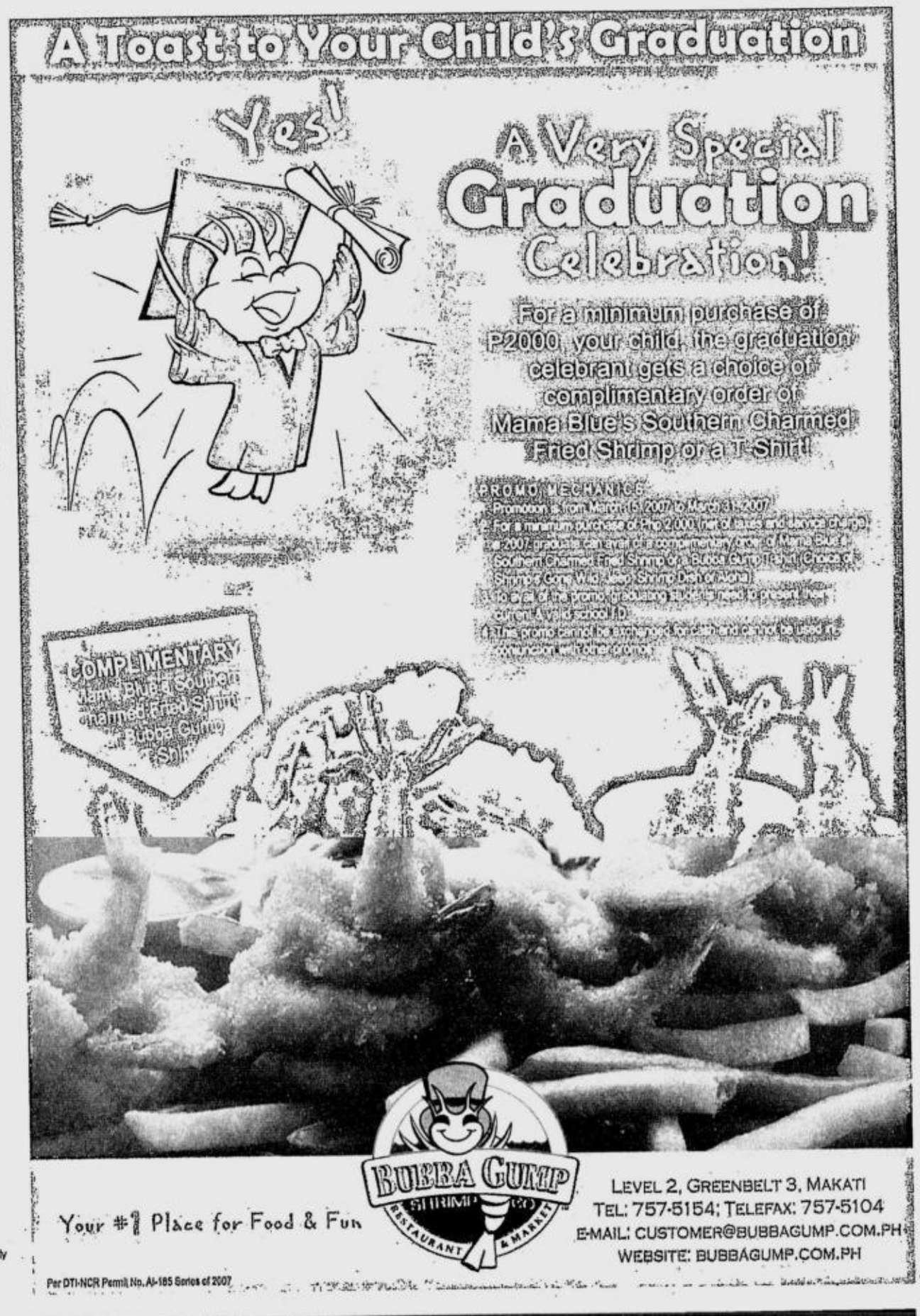
White chocolate contains cocoa butter, sugar, milk solids, vanilla and lecithin, which makes for a truly sweet and sumptuous taste.

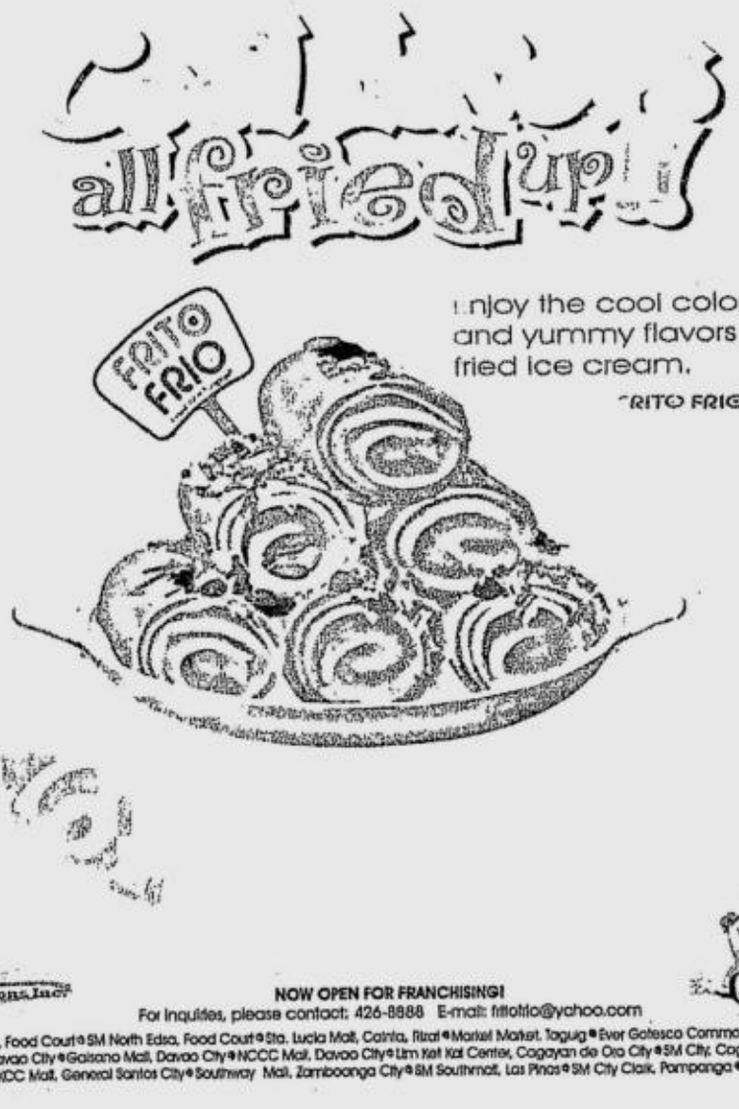
Dark chocolate gives a somewhat bitter taste because it isn't as processed as white or milk chocolate, meaning it contains more cacao. However, dark chocolate is more health-giving than other chocolate variants because it contains more flavonoids, potent plant compounds that slow down the processing of bad or LDL cholesterol into material that clogs the arteries.

You can enjoy both the taste and health-giving goodness of these chocolate types with Cadbury Gold. The newest of Cadbury's chocolates, Cadbury Gold features the finest blend of dark and milk chocolate coats.

Cadbury Gold also comes loaded with generous amounts of tangy fruits, crunchy oven-roasted nuts and crisp wafer pieces.

Cadbury Gold is available in strawberry and almond, and apricot and walnut variants.





Nestlé
MILO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

EDDIE GUTIERREZ

GERMAN Moreno, who financed the project, escorts good friend Gloria Romero

CARIDAD SANCHEZ

ELIZABETH OROPESA

CELIA RODRIGUEZ

Mowelfund unveils Paradise of Stars

By Nini Valera

THE STARS CAME IN DROVES on Saturday night to witness the unveiling of the Paradise of Stars at the Movie Workers' Welfare Foundation Inc. (Mowelfund) compound in Quezon City.

German Moreno financed the creation of this piece of "paradise" at the 6,700 square-meter Mowelfund property, transforming a portion of the garden at the Mowelfund Plaza into a veritable Walk of Fame showcasing 86 five-pointed stars in bronze.

The stars bear the names of movie greats being honored for their outstanding contributions to the film industry.

"This is my legacy to local movies," said Moreno, who also financed the first Walk of Fame patterned after the Hollywood version in Libis, Quezon City. "I want future generations to remember the biggest stars of today."

Moreno, Kuya Germs in show biz circles, had star-shaped bright lights installed all over the place—and on the trees—making it a virtual fantasy setting.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremonies, life-sized standees of Kuya Germs and popular stars were also unveiled.

The standees of the likes of Robin Padilla, Jolina Magdangal, Sharon Cuneta, Niño

MOWELFUND/ F2

EDDIE GARCIA

PHOTOS BY AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

Film board: RP movies grew by 40 % from '05

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THERE'S GOOD NEWS FOR the local movie industry, according to the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP).

In its 2006 accomplishment report to President Macapagal-Arroyo, Rolando "Jackie" Atienza, the film board's chair, declared: "The local film industry showed a remarkable turnaround in 2006. The [nationwide] revenues ... grew by 40 percent ... from P1.025 billion in 2005 to P1.437 billion in 2006."

Atienza furnished INQUIRER Entertainment a copy of the report and, in an exclusive interview, reiterated: "The sales of foreign major studios declined (from P2.492 billion in '05 to P2.370 billion in '06). Same with the profits of foreign independents (from P660 million in '05 to P607 million in '06). In 2006, the only sector that showed growth was local movies."

Atienza said the figures were provided by the Office of the Presidential Consultant on Entertainment and confirmed by Ric Camaligan, head of the National Cinema Association of the Philippines and the Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council.

"There was a strong showing of local films last year, but there were other factors to consider," Camaligan said. "One of them is the sustained fight against piracy by the Council and the Optical Media Board headed by Edu Manzano."

Atienza added: "The upward trend is accurate because even ABS-CBN, in its third-quarter 2006 disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, reported that four of its movies earned over P100 million. According to a source, it earned a total of P700 million." He stressed that the report did not include "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," Star Cinema's Metro Manila Film Festival top-notcher, which posted P142 million in ticket sales late last year.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

The INQUIRER obtained a copy of ABS-CBN's quarterly report, which confirmed Atienza's findings: "[Sales of subsidiaries] went up by 14 percent to P940 million in 2006, boosted by the strong performance of the film [division, which] released eight movies compared to four [in 2005]."

The ABS-CBN report continued: "Out of the eight Star Cinema films, four—'Don't Give Up On Us,' 'Close to You,' 'Sukob' and 'You Are the One'—grossed more than P100 million each. In particular, 'Sukob' earned over P200 million."

This positive development in local movies, Atienza asserted, confirmed one major FDCP theory: "Quality sells."

In the accomplishment report, Atienza noted: "It is the thesis of the FDCP that the growth of the local film industry is hinged on

FILM BOARD/ F6

STAR-SHAPED lights on the trees lend a virtual fantasy setting.

LILIA Dizon, Espiridion Laxa and Bella Flores

Mowelfund unveils . . .

From page F1

Muhlach, Bong Revilla, Rudy Fernandez, Eddie Garcia, Tessie Agana and Boy Alano, Maricel Soriano, Susan Roces, Amalia Fuentes, Rogelio dela Rosa, Joseph Estrada, Vilma Santos were donated by GMA 7 and ABS-CBN, according to Moreno.

Replacements

"I know that these standees, which are only made of cardboard, may not survive the typhoon season," said Moreno. "But I am hoping to convince the stars themselves to have their own statues made to replace the standees."

Sharon Cuneta and Eddie Garcia, two of the stars who graced the occasion, earlier signified their interest in doing just that, Moreno added.

Even before the Paradise of Stars, the Mowelfund compound had long been a popular local tourist attraction and destination for school children on awareness trips.

During peak seasons, as many as 14 bus loads of tourists and school children come, said Mowelfund executive director Boots Anson-Roa.

"We give lectures on film appreciation," said Anson-Roa. "We also have film showings that encourage children to appreciate movies."

These have been a source of income for Mowelfund, which has been cash-strapped lately, even if its share from the proceeds of the annual Metro Manila Film Festival was increased from 30 to 35 percent last year. It used to be the festival's lone beneficiary.

Annual expenses

"We need at least P13 million a year for operational expenses," said Anson-Roa.

The Mowelfund has 4,500 members—2,700 of them honorary members who are exempt from paying the P300 annual dues.

"Most of the members are not top earners in the industry," said Anson-Roa. "Some can't even pay the dues, so we have to help them update their accounts so they can avail of the benefits."

Traditionally, the Mowelfund offers health and death benefits, though the amounts have been slashed due to lack of funds.

Last year, Mowelfund's share from the MMFF pie came to only P4.3 million.

Income from tours

Anson-Roa told INQUIRER Entertainment that the Paradise of Stars will enhance the attraction of Mowelfund as a local tourist destination and a movie industry landmark, generating income from the "tourists."

The new walk is expected to generate income from local movie tourists

The Paradise of Stars is an extension of the Mowelfund Museum, which occupies two floors of the Mowelfund building.

The building houses movie memorabilia since 1897, when the Spaniards brought motion pictures to the Philippines as a new form of entertainment. It also has a film archive and library.

An annex houses the FPJ Hall and Hall of National Artists for film.

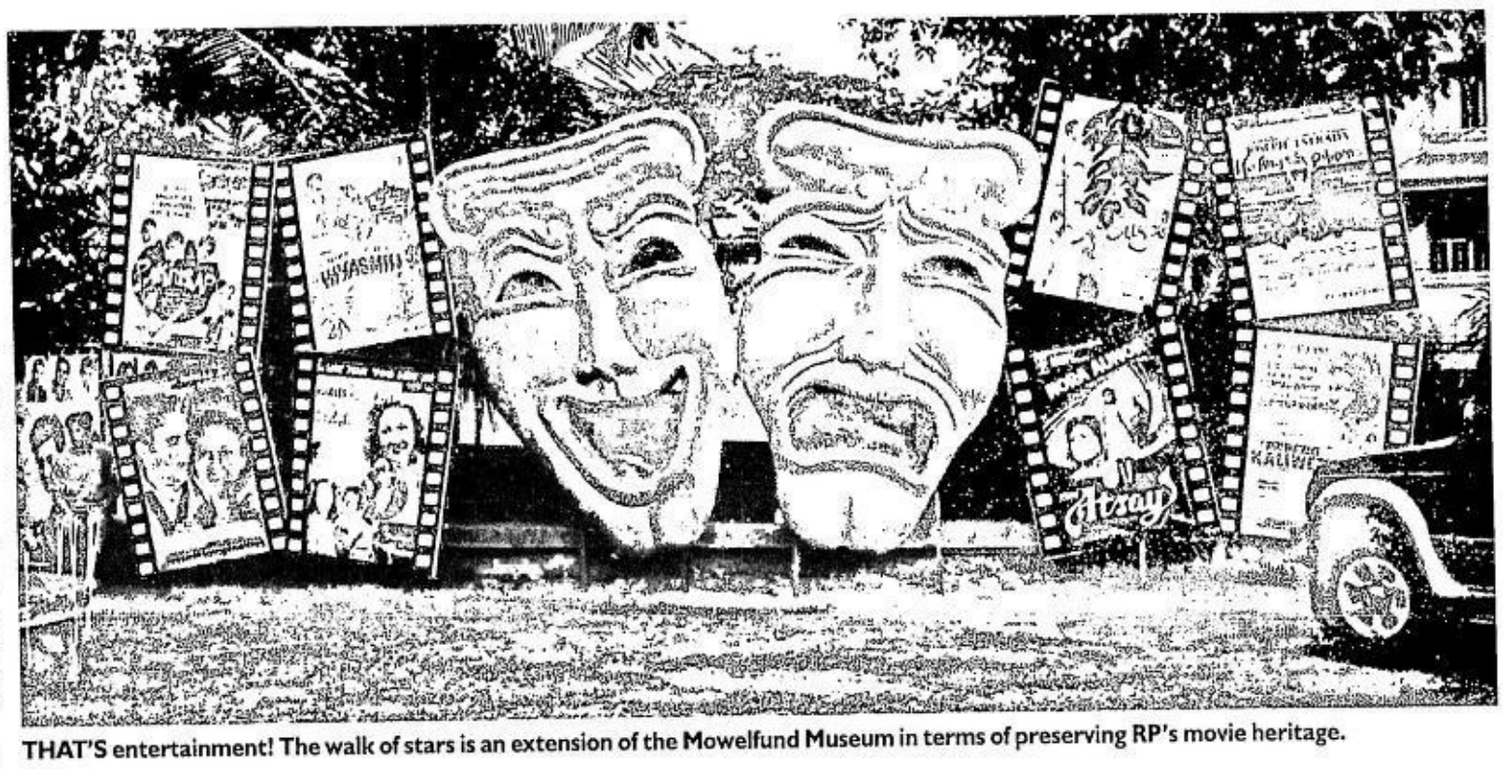
Preserving a heritage

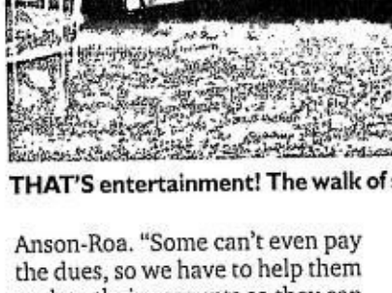
"Only someone like Kuya Germs could pull this off," said Anson-Roa, referring to the Paradise of Stars.

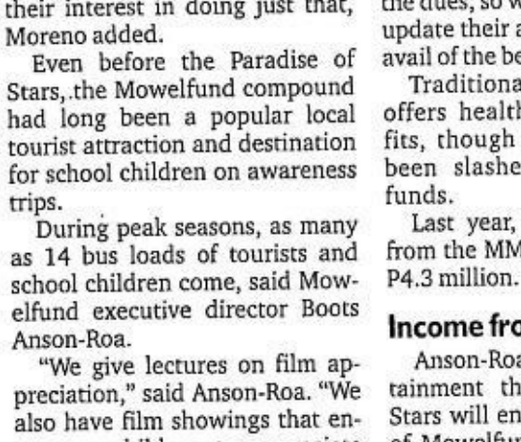
Moreno even had a theme song, "Ito Ang Alay Ko," composed by Tats Faustino.

He said he hoped more stars would help in preserving the heritage of local movies.

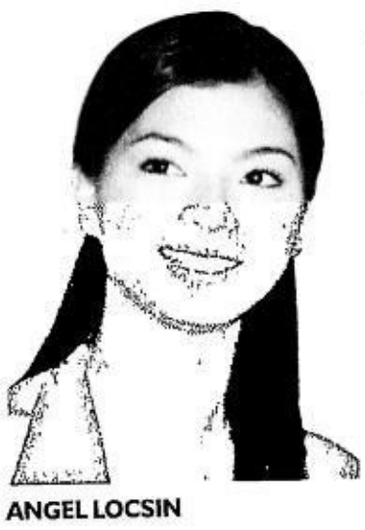
"This might not bring the movie industry back to life," said Moreno, "but it would make the younger generation aware that once upon a time, we made movies that reflected our culture as a people. If only for that, we should preserve the memories that local movies, as an entertainment medium, has given us through several decades."


THAT'S entertainment! The walk of stars is an extension of the Mowelfund Museum in terms of preserving RP's movie heritage.


PILITA Corrales in a party mood


CATCHING UP. Celia Rodriguez and Marichu Vera Perez Maceda

MARVIN AGUSTIN



ANGEL LOCSIN

Marvin denies part in Angel-Oyo breakup

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

EVEN IF MARVIN AGUSTIN IS loveless at the moment, love is still in everything he does. He's an all-heart guy whether he's doting on his twins, supervising his resto staff or portraying a role.

That heart is now under renovation. So there's no truth to talk pinpointing him as the cause of the **Angel Locsin** and **Oyo Boy Sotto** split-up.

He sighs. "*Dyahe naman kay* Gel. We're both recovering *pa* from a breakup. Our hearts both still need to heal."

Or is he just wary of falling for a younger woman again like his ex, **Pauleen Luna**? "I don't have a certain age preference *naman*. Love just hits me."

Marvin is off to Bangkok with Angel and **Binoe** to shoot for their top-rating "Asian Treasures." But his real treasure are his two sons. "*Ang itim naming tatlo* 'cause we swim a lot. When I'm free, I pick them up from their mom's place. We have a cool arrangement. *Katuwa*! They hug the TV when they see me on-screen."

Marvs has really embraced fatherhood. It's his reward for living well and loving true.

Cager danger

Rufa Mae Quinto is pissed that her ex-boyfriend, cager **Rudy Hatfield**, keeps dragging her name into his interviews.

"I hope he and his fiancee will leave me in peace. They have apologized but I really got bothered when he e-mailed me, saying he will expose everything about our past on TV. Out of respect for the six years we were together, I hope he shuts up. I was devastated when we broke up. *Di naman ako nagpapaawa. Nasaktan talaga ako* to the point *na na-ospital pa nga ako*!

"But I'm thankful he left me 'cause when I was still with him, *sa kanya lang umikot mundo ko*. Now with **Erik (Santos)**, I can grow. Erik is such a kind soul. With him, I can do things I never thought I could do before."

Ms Bombshell is not just moving on. She's moving up!

Swellhead?

Could it be true that Seiko Films' first choice for the lead role in "Silip" was **Alfred Vargas** but they tapped **Polo Ravales** instead 'cause Alfred had become swellheaded and refused to renew his contract? I texted Alfred to clarify the issue but he hasn't replied.

I've known him since his Ateneo days. Fame hasn't changed him a bit. Maybe he just has other priorities now. His home studio paved the way for him, but there comes a time in every actor's career when he must shift directions in order to stay in the race.

Asia's Nightingale

Manila has missed Asia's Nightingale **Lani Misalucha**. She's now based in Vegas where she wows audiences at the Flamingo night after night. Catch her in "Missing You" on March 17 at the Big Dome. Joining her are **Frenchie Dy**, **Mau Marcelo** and **Gary Valenciano**. For tickets, call 9115555.

Unlike most divas, Lani does not need to get all flashy to be classy. She's a chanteuse nonpareil.

Lani says, "I see no reason why other singers should be insecure about me. How strange the rumors that **Regine** and I have a gap. I'm inviting her to watch my concert."

For the first time, Lani will really groove. "*Kakaiba ang mga sayaw ko sa* concert! *May* **Britney** number *ako*! I will also do a 'Dreamgirls,' **[Barbra] Streisand** medley."

She was thrilled to meet one of her idols, **Gladys Knight**. "I was speechless when she went backstage after watching my show."

As our "Nightingale" soars high in foreign shores, it's good to know she hasn't lost sight of her nest, where she is irreplaceable.

Top model

Solar Entertainment and RPN 9 present "Philippines' Next Top Model," a reality TV series every Tuesday at 8:30 p.m. Hosted by the ravishing **Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas**, the show features challenges that the candidates will hurdle, from daily chores to rigorous training from actual footage shot 24/7.

The winner gets a contract with Starz modeling agency in Hong Kong, P500,000 in cash, and a south sea pearl necklace—among other fab prizes. Strike a pose and strike gold!

'Love Spell'

Love shines on the dance floor this March in "Love Spell's" "Shoes Ko Po, Shoes Ko Day!" (every Sunday after "Your Song"). It features the Ultimate Dance 4 lovebirds **Shaina Magdayao**, **Rayver Cruz**, **Maja Salvador** and **John Prats**.

In this love story with a magical twist, what will happen when the two dancing belles turn into ugly ducklings in the middle of their dates?

Are good looks really important in choosing a partner? John says, "Of course it all starts with physical attraction. But that should not be the sole basis of a relationship. Beauty fades. It's character that stays."

Oh yeah! We can't change people we love. We can only unmask them.

Gay pageant

Glamourosity Entertainment presents the very first Mr. Gay Philippines on March 17, 7 p.m. at Metrobar West Avenue. Hosts are Bb. Pilipinas Universe 2002 **Karen Agustin** and **Brad Turvey**. The winner will vie for the title Mr. Gay International in the US. For tickets, call 6363604/6356921.

Gay Pride... they wear it well!

Piolo and Sam

Some things are worth repeating. Like the sold-out "Heartthrobs" concert of **Piolo Pascual** and **Sam Milby**. If you missed their sensational V-day show, catch them on March 17 at the Aliw Theater. For tickets, call 9115555.

Piolo is overwhelmed that he has conquered the concert stage as well. "Acting is my first love. Singing is a bonus from God. I still can't believe I have records," he exclaims.

If PJ had to choose, what would he give up? "If I could have it my way, I wouldn't want to give up both. Acting gives me a chance to experiment portraying different characters. Singing takes me to places where I can reach out to more *kababayans*."

His "national anthem" is U2's "All I Want is You." And that's exactly what Sam and Piolo's diehard fans are chanting. Even if they're singing for the nth time, these two "Papas ng Bayan" never sound like a broken record.

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

Give us more Rae and Blunt

LEA SALONGA

WE'RE OFFICIALLY NOT MARY J. Blige fans. "Grammy nominees 2007" (Sony BMG) is out and we don't mind saying we speed-skip all the time from the opening track, Gnarls Barkley's "Crazy," which is arresting for its heart-thumping beat, to Corinne Bailey Rae's "Put Your Records On."

Don't you just love this girl? At first we thought she sounded like a less angry Alanis Morisette. Then we got it: a sober Rickie Lee Jones! Which means the melody is catchy—and the lyrics are clear. More, please.

In last year's collection, "Grammy Nominees 2006," our favorite "discoveries" were Rascal Flatts and Jack Johnson. This year, it's got to be Rae and James Blunt. Until we saw him perform on the last Grammy Awards ceremonies, we lent only an ear to this weird-looking chap. Now we're eager to hear the whole package.

Apart from Rae, Blunt and Barkley, the other surprise treats in this package are: Dixie Chicks' "Not Ready to Make Nice" of course, Justin Timberlake's "Sexyback", Red Hot Chili Peppers' "Dani California" and Death Cab For Cutie's "I Will Follow You Into the Dark." There's John Legend's "Save Room" and John Mayer's "Waiting on the World to Change," too, but we've been plugged into these two gentlemen for months now.

SPIN CITY

Lea on MYX today

Lea Salonga may be in Broadway right now, playing Fantine in the award-winning musical "Les Miserables," but fans can catch her tonight at 9 on MYX, as the music channel's (23, Sky Cable) featured artist.

"MYX Presents Lea Salonga" showcases the internationally acclaimed artist as she performs cuts from her latest album, "Inspired" (Sony BMG), like "Waiting for Love," "Land of the Loving," the Jim Brickman composition "To Hear You Say You Love Me" and the carrier single "Promise Me" originally by Beverly Craven.

Lea is accompanied by The Global Studio Orchestra conducted by her brother, young maestro Gerard Salonga. "Inspired," the product of close collaboration between the siblings, is Lea's first studio album in seven years. It reached gold status within three weeks of its release.

GRAMMY NOMINEES 2007

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Why Antonella is disappointed

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

ANTONELLA BARBA

SUNDANCE HEAD

JARED COTTER, SUNDANCE HEAD AND Sabrina Sloan all felt bad about getting the boot on "American Idol" last week and therefore not making it to the Top 12. Controversial semi-finalist Antonella Barba was disappointed about something else.

Antonella, who has been the subject of controversy on account of her racy photos on the Internet, said in a recent conference call (made possible by StarWorld) that the snapshots were personal and used without her consent.

"[Plus] all that stuff was completely irrelevant due to the fact that I was in the show to sing," the 20-year-old Cindy Crawford look-alike explained.

"That wasn't the way I intended to portray myself," the New Jersey girl said of the photos. "I would rather promote myself in a more classy way."

She quickly added, however, that she wasn't opposed to taking up acting or modeling offers.

JARED COTTER

How do you feel about getting eliminated?

I feel shocked, man. It was real disappointing. I never expected to go home this early.

Do you think the votes were based on singing talent alone?

Definitely not.

What are you planning to do now?

I have to wait a few months before I get a deal, but there are definitely things on the horizon. I model and I act as well, so I'm going to stay in LA for a few more weeks.

Who you were looking forward to working with among the show's scheduled guests?

Quincy Jones. I wanted to see what comments he'd have for me, even criticisms.

What are you going to miss most about "Idol"?

The celebrity that one gains by doing this show. It's instant and it's a lot of fun. [And] I'm just going to miss everybody.

ANTONELLA BARBA

How hard was it to have to deal with all of the external things going on around you, as you moved along in the show?

It was definitely difficult. I tried to block it out as much as possible and stay focused on the com-

WHY/ F5

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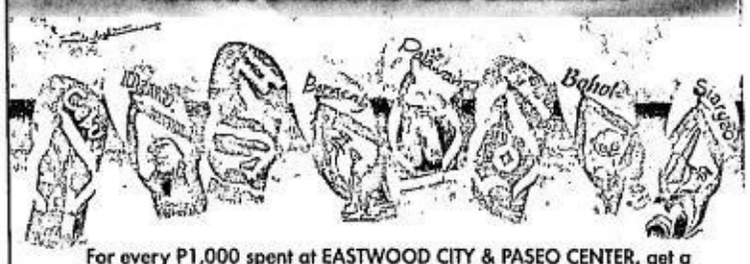

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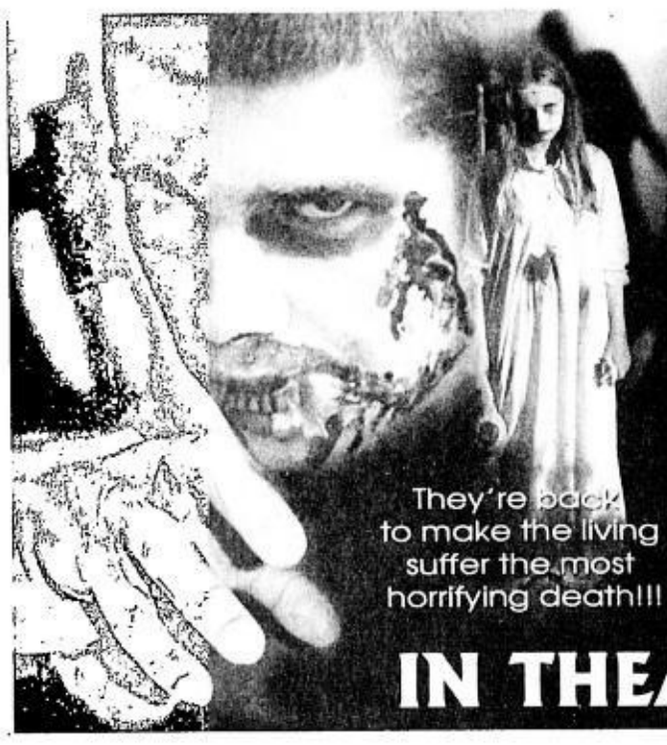
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IN THEATERS MARCH 21

SABRINA SLOAN

JARED COTTER

From page F4

petition.

Some of the judges' comments on your singing weren't flattering. What was it like for you to stand there and hear them?

It's difficult to be put down, especially on national television. More so to be told that you're not good when you've made it this far, and you know that you've earned it.

Your roommate, Stephanie Edwards, said she thought of you as her best friend. What did you say to each other before you left?

I'm so happy for her. I knew she was going to make it. We actually both thought that we would both make it.

How did you prepare yourself mentally to perform and to not be distracted by the media fuss?

Sometimes you get that nervous feeling in your stomach. The vocal coach told me, "Don't mistake that for nerves, turn that energy into positive energy." If you can turn nerves into positive energy that will feed your performance, you can just have fun with it.

SABRINA SLOAN

The judges were shocked when you were eliminated. What went through your mind?

I was shocked, too. I hadn't prepared myself for going home—partly because of the judges saying I deserved to be in the Top 12. [Maybe] America thought I was safe and they didn't need to vote.

What do you see yourself doing next?

Singing and performing, absolutely. That's my passion. I will try to put out an album, for sure.

What kind of album?

Something like ... I like Corinne Bailey Rae a lot.

Is there one person you would most like to see win "Idol" now?

Melinda is obviously great ... she's a great person inside and out.

What are you going to miss most about "Idol"?

Performing. That first week on the show was incredible ... a total rush.

SUNDANCE HEAD

How has your experience been on 'Idol'?

Wonderful. I'm thankful that I got to work with so many professionals. They taught me a lot.

Do you think you're going to continue with music?

Absolutely. As soon as I get back home, I'm going to start working on a record.

What do you think happened?

I'm not really sure. [Maybe] America considered me to be safe and didn't need the votes. I'm still in a bit of a shock.

Who were you most looking forward to working with?

Definitely Bono. Just to be in the same room with that guy would be an honor.

How hard was it being away from your family while you were on "Idol"?

I'm a very emotional guy. It was hard being away from my family. My kid, he's only three months old, and I missed out. The last time I saw him, he couldn't do anything, but sleep and eat. Now he smiles, he laughs. He moves around, he crawls. He holds his head up, and he's figuring out what his hands are.

Everybody was sad about you leaving. Sanjaya was almost ashamed he got to stay on.

Sanjaya Malakar is just a kid. But he's got a great talent. He just needs to grow, learn about himself and be confident.

What are you going to miss most about "Idol"?

Free breakfast (laughs). They treated everyone like stars ... "American Idol" is a first-class organization. I'm very proud to have been part of an elite group.

"American Idol" airs on Star World Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 6 p.m. live via satellite, with replays at 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

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1 DREAMGIRLS
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3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
MTRCB PG-13
12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

2 300
MTRCB R-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

4 PATHFINDER
MTRCB R-13
12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
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300 R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	GOOD SHEPHERD R13 12:45,3:50,6:55,10:00	DREAM GIRLS PG13 11:50,2:30,5:10, 7:50,10:30

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Fab Four lives on: Area One and Apple Band

THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE way the melody and lyrics are fused in the songs of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr that makes them still strike a chord in the hearts of listeners after more than 40 years.

Whatever the reasons behind the timelessness of The Beatles' songs, the members of Area One, one of the most popular show bands today, are only too glad to dish them out during Saturday at Merk's Bar Bistro in Makati City.

SHOW TIME

Area One front man John Lesaca, who traded his signature violin for a 12-string acoustic guitar from Japan, tells INQUIRER Entertainment in an interview that he grew up listening to The Beatles, and learned to love the deceptively simple and catchy tunes.

He shared this love with neighbor Cash Manalang, whom he grew up with in a friendly community in the UP Diliman campus called Area 1, and they would sing the songs to their heart's content.

"They were so easy to learn and sing, and I believe most musicians who followed were influenced by them somehow," Manalang says.

But it was not until April of 2004 that John and Cash, who went their own musical paths, got together and went back to their first love—The Beatles' songs.

Soon to join them was "Eat Bulaga" director Bert de Leon, also an avowed Beatlemaniac who couldn't find an outlet for his passion until John and Cash came knocking on his door.

They started practicing, honing and refining their skills and soon, Area One was born.

Since 2004, Area One has performed at the Hard Rock Café in Glorietta 3 and now at Merk's Bar. They are also popular performers at private parties and corporate events.

Area One held its own as front act to British duo Chad and Jeremy; Chris Montez, Dennis Yost and Gordon Waller of Peter and Gordon Fame; and more recently, The Cascades.

Last year, Area One was a finalist in the Aliw Awards as Best Performer in Music Lounges.

Today, John, Cash and Bert are joined by guitarist Roy Marinduque, drummer Benjie Santos and keyboard player Carlo Gaa for a full and fresh sound.

Manalang says there are a lot of other bands out there that can easily sing The Beatles' songs, simple as they are to learn and understand.

However, he says, what makes Area One different is that they grew up with the music and they love it with a passion.

Tina A. Dumlao

The Apple Band

"The Beatles Forever! With The Apple Band"—a three-night gigmounted by Steve O'Neal Productions and George Montero, Hard Rock Café, Hyatt Hotel and Casino-Manila—kicks off at the Hard Rock Café in Makati City at 7:30 p.m. on March 23.

(The group will also play at the RJTV Bar, also in Makati City, on March 22.)

The music series features Beatles hit songs as performed by The Apple Band—David Leon as John Lennon, Jeff Toczynski as Paul McCartney, David Brighton as George Harrison and Mike Sarafian as Ringo Starr.

The performances will be highlighted by a major concert at the Aliw Theater in Pasay City on March 24 at 8 p.m. and end with a dinner-concert at Hyatt Hotel and Casino-Manila at 7 p.m. on March 25.

Call 891-9999 or 893-4661 to 64.

Film board: RP movies grew ...

From page F1

the ability to produce films of greater quality ... [because] the market for Filipino films has changed tremendously."

He told the INQUIRER: "Moviegoers expect producers to churn out high-quality products because of the higher ticket prices. Moreover, the FDCP's survey, conducted by the Social Weather Station, showed that over 60 percent of the movie-going public are high school graduates. They are more demanding. Local movies no longer cater to the *bakya* crowd. From the D-E classes, local films should now be [looking at] the A-B."

Bigger challenge

Atienza theorized that the previous five-year decline in the profitability of local movies could be attributed to the producers' failure to adapt to the changing market. "They continued to produce non-quality films, but kept upping ticket prices. It was like selling Divisoria products at Makati prices," he said.

The bigger challenge now, Atienza admitted, was to recover local companies' competitiveness vis-à-vis foreign mainstream films. "We should work for our old market share. Local films used to have almost 50 percent [market share, in terms of total box office receipts]. Last year, we posted only 25 percent."

He stressed, "Out of the 55 local films produced last year, 42 were submitted to the Cinema Evaluation Board for grading and 32 were graded favorably—23 Bs and nine As." A-graded movies are given 100-percent amusement tax rebate; B-films, 65 percent.

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Admission Fee- P200
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER
PREMIERE CINEMA
YOU GOT ME
CENTERSTAGE
300
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
BECAUSE I SAID SO
CINEMA 2
DREAMGIRLS
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 DREAMGIRLS
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 BATAD
4 GHOST RIDER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 300
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 HAPPY HEARTS
9 SIQUIJOR
10 DEAD PEOPLE 2
11 PATHFINDER
12 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 PATHFINDER
3 GHOST RIDER
4 300
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 SIQUIJOR
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
12 BATAD

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 PRIMEVAL
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 GHOST RIDER
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 PATHFINDER
8 HAPPY HEARTS
9 BECAUSE I SAID SO
10 SIQUIJOR
11 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12 BATAD

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 PATHFINDER
4 SIQUIJOR
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 BATAD
9 YOU GOT ME
10 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PATHFINDER
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 SIQUIJOR
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
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2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 SIQUIJOR
4 300
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 YOU GOT ME
8 GHOST RIDER
9 BATAD

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 300

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 GHOST RIDER
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6 300
7 EPIC MOVIE
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
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1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
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1 300
2 THE HITCHER
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 HAPPY HEARTS

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2 300
3 HAPPY HEARTS
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2 GHOST RIDER
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4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 300
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7 HAPPY HEARTS
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1 300
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
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5 YOU GOT ME
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1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 YOU GOT ME
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 NUMBER 23

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1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
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2 MUSIC ANG LYRIS
3 YOU GOT ME
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2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
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4 300

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3 300
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A GIRL BOY THING
6 HAPPY HEARTS
7 RESERVED
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2 EPIC MOVIE
3 300
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER
6 YOU GOT ME
7 HAPPY HEARTS
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1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVINSIBLES
4 YOU GOT ME

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PATHFINDER 1:20 / 3:30 / 5:40 / 7:50 / 10:00	DREAMGIRLS 1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30	300 2:05 / 4:35 / 7:05 / 9:50
THE GOOD SHEPHERD 2:00 / 5:30 / 9:00	YOU GOT ME 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:50

Mall 5

1 300 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	2 PATHFINDER 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00	3 HAPPY HEARTS 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
4 SIQUIJOR 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00	5 YOU GOT ME 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	300 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

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March 17, Saturday 8 pm

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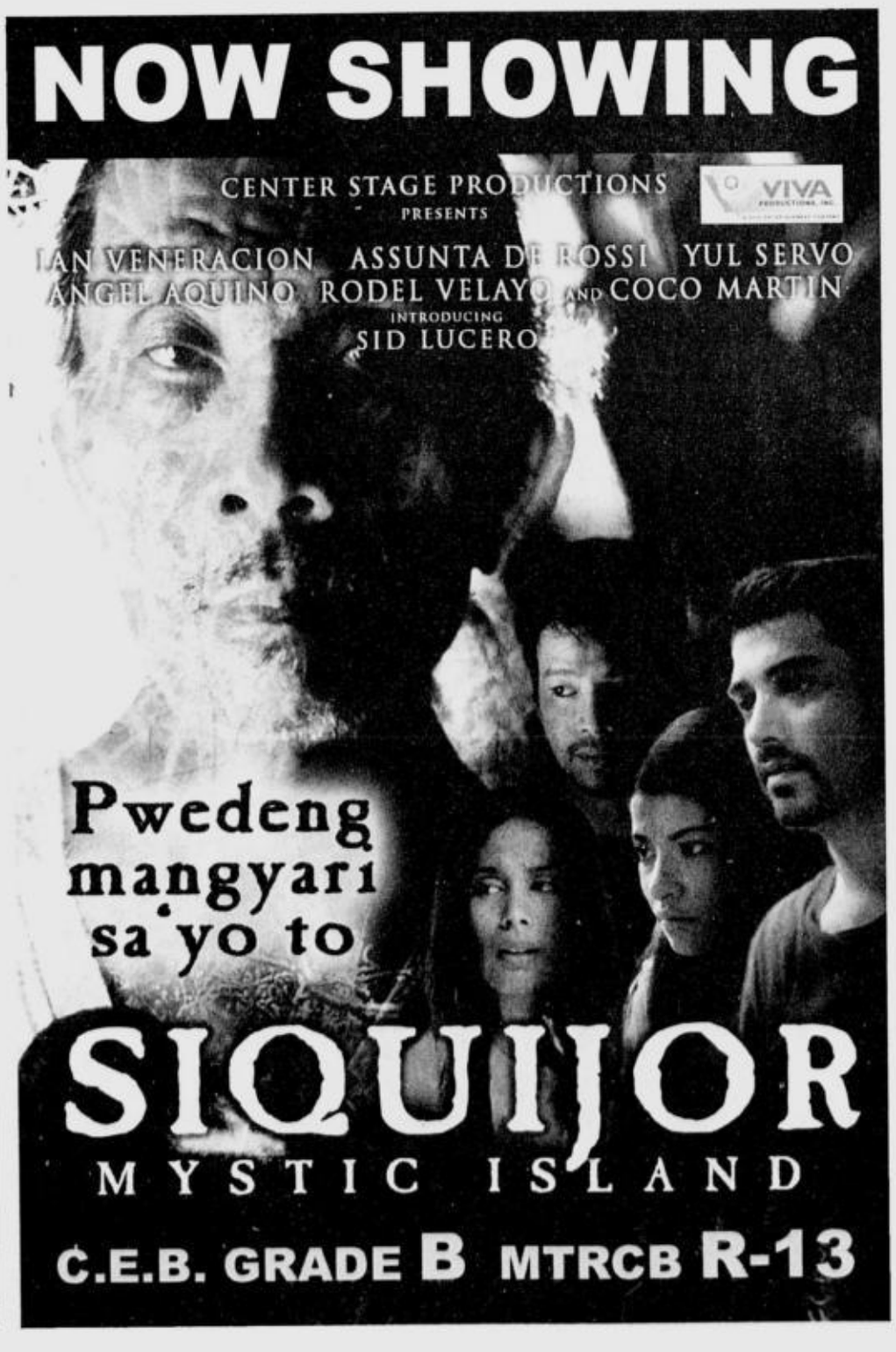

Young stars take over

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ESTABLISHED FILM STARS HAVE cause to worry: Of the new movies being trotted out for viewers' enjoyment and patronage during the first quarter of 2007, most top-bill new talents. Take a look at the cast lists:

"Faces of Love," **Christopher de Leon, Angel Aquino, Bembol Roco, Alfred Vargas, Juliana Palermo.**

"The Promise," **Richard Gutierrez, Angel Locsin.**

"You Got Me," **Toni Gonzaga, Sam Milby, Zanjoe Marudo.**

"Happy Hearts," **Rayver Cruz, Shaina Magdayao, Rustom Padilla.**

In these films' stellar lists, only a few established veteran leads like Christopher and Rustom manage to hold on to the marquee, in the competitive company of many more young top-billers like Richard, Angel, Toni, Sam, Zanjoe, Rayver and Shaina.

Thus are our movie producers making known their pragmatic view that veteran stars may be gifted and experienced, but the country's acutely youthful demographic practically forces them to discover and field new and younger stars for the new and younger film audience.

While we submit that experienced stars can still draw crowds if they top-bill fresh and creative projects, we must admit that youth is still what sells to the 2007 film market. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, because youth can mean vitality, topicality, pertinence and excitement.

Sadly, however, young talents in these parts are chosen mainly for their looks, so some of them are deficient in talent and the right stellar attitude and work ethic.

> Sadly, these new talents are chosen mainly for their looks, so some of them are deficient in skill, work ethic and right attitude

Many new discoveries also lack a distinct look, personality and charisma, so they don't really stand out. Quite a number of them are now being discovered in TV talent tilts where viewers do the voting, resulting in some superficial and therefore poor choices.

Even when the young stars are proven hitmakers, they're sometimes rushed into roles too challenging for them, as in the case of Richard Gutierrez and Angel Locsin in "The Promise," so their performances come off as inadequate and "forcing-through."

Older and more experienced young-adult stars should have essayed those roles, but most of them don't have the crowd-drawing power of the Richard-Angel love team, so there you go...

Since young leads are the current trend, producers simply have to come up with *fresh* projects that are *right* for them.

At the same time, they should continue developing new star's thespic skills by way of rigorous workshops, so that their stellar vehicles won't end up as a series of shallow, puerile and predictable teen romps that quickly lose their ability to attract and excite moviegoers into seeing them.

As for our experienced stars, we urge producers to also come up with well-conceptualized projects for them. It would be a waste of good talent if they were mostly shunted off into cameo or supporting bits.

We know that producers need to keep an eagle eye on the financial bottom line, but talent is a resource that shouldn't be wasted in itty-bitty roles, or made to die on the vine due to neglect.

The healthiest film industries are those that come up with movies for *all* age categories and preferences, and even niche markets must be served. Talented young stars are welcome, but their popularity shouldn't mean the extinction of their elders and betters!

FEEDBACK

Real critic

From Ronald Tolentino (ronaldtolentinosing):

For Nestor Torre: Now you are talking as a real movie critic should. Acting is not all about melodramatic insinuations but more about inward emotion. Eyes being the window to the soul, they are used by true thespians (or shall I say would-be thespians like Kim Chiu) in their repertoire in their craft.

For minors

From Julius Aganon (aganon@cox.net) 2642 E. Brookwood Ct., Phoenix, Az, USA:

Can [Pia Guanio] handle a show that would tackle family and moral values? Almost half of the Philippine population consists of minors, according to Ms Guanio herself and this subject should benefit [them]. Show biz in the Philippines has become more and more like Hollywood, where divorce and having multiple partners are widespread practices. Unfortunately, these are now largely accepted as just another way of life.

Loved it!

From Lorie Nicholas (via e-mail):

For Ruben Nepales: I just have to tell you how much I loved your interview with Gerard Butler. You asked him some really fabulous questions and I thank you. You truly must have a way of drawing people out, because he was very candid in his replies to you.

I have been a big fan of Gerry's since "Phantom of the Opera," one of my all-time favorite musicals—and now one of my all-time favorite movies. I really believe no one else could have played the "Phantom" better than Gerry did, and it should have been a bigger success.

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GALLERIA

1 THE PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS • THX	6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 DREAMGIRLS	7 SYQUIJOR
3 HAPPY HEARTS	8 indieSine: COMPOUND
4 PATHFINDER	9 300
5 YOU GOT ME	10 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

ERMITA

1 300	
2 HAPPY HEARTS	5 PATHFINDER
3 THE PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS	6 DREAMGIRLS
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO	7 SYQUIJOR

METRO EAST

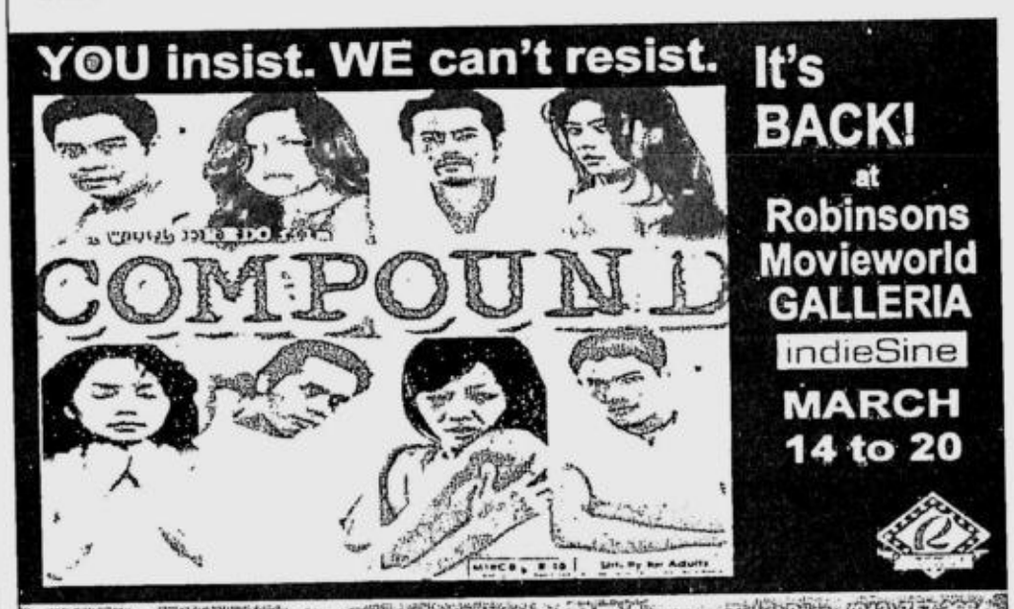
1 DREAMGIRLS	5 HAPPY HEARTS
2 PATHFINDER	6 300
3 YOU GOT ME	7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO	8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

NOVALICHES

1 PATHFINDER	4 300
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	5 YOU GOT ME
3 HAPPY HEARTS	6 DREAMGIRLS

PIONEER

1 PATHFINDER	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 300	4 DREAMGIRLS



STA. ROSA

1 HAPPY HEARTS	1 MUSIC and LYRICS
2 300	2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 BABEL	3 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
4 YOU GOT ME	4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 MUSIC and LYRICS	5 YOU GOT ME

DASMARIÑAS **ANGELES**

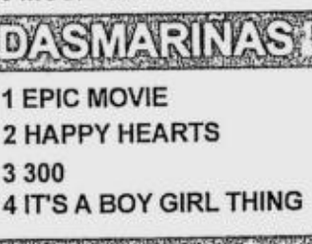
1 EPIC MOVIE	1 EPIC MOVIE
2 HAPPY HEARTS	2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 300	3 300
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	4 BECAUSE I SAID SO

IMUS **STARMILLS**

1 PATHFINDER	1 EPIC MOVIE
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 HAPPY HEARTS	3 300
4 300	4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 YOU GOT ME	5 YOU GOT ME
6 THE HITCHER	6 THE NUMBER 3

BACOLOD **ILOILO**

1 HAPPY HEARTS	1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300	2 300
3 YOU GOT ME	3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 HANNIBAL RISING	4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
5 FLUSHED AWAY	5 THE HITCHER
6 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES	6 indieSine: ROME and JULIET



indieSine Featured FILM
march 14 to 20
Robinsons Movieworld
ILOILO
Rome and Juliet

This tale follows the romantic journey of two straight women caught in a web of forbidden love. Juliet, a conservative pre-school teacher hires Rome, a liberated businesswoman to be her wedding planner. As they go through the preparations, the two develop a relationship that the groom to be soon finds out

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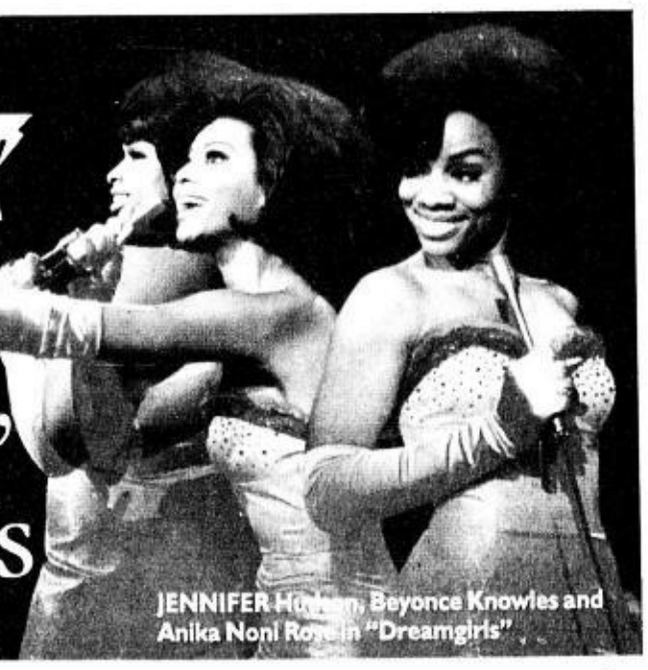
REVIEW

Dreams, schemes, extremes



JENNIFER Hudson, Beyonce Knowles and Anika Noni Rose in "Dreamgirls"

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

IT'S EASY TO LIKE "DREAMGIRLS," writer-director Bill Condon's big-screen translation of the '80s Broadway hit, which centers on the bustling music careers and some failed ambitions of pioneering African-American radio stars. Set in Detroit during the '60s, the film is a revealing look at the machinations and questionable dealings behind this aspect of show biz. The film's song-and-dance revelries also provide an enticing escape while allowing for moving personal dramas.

Like the Supremes

It's about the rags-to-riches story of the Dreamettes, an aspiring Supremes-like group which discovers firsthand that success in the business isn't without compromises. The young women—Deena Jones (Beyonce Knowles), Lorell Robinson (Anika Noni Rose) and Effie White (Jennifer Hudson)—are given a break by a sneaky car salesman, Curtis (Jamie Foxx), who's not beyond rigging talent shows and taking advantage of ambitious hopefuls. Thanks to him, however, the Dreamettes soon land a gig with rising rock and roll performer James "Thunder" Early (Eddie Murphy), a James Brown-Little Richard hybrid.

With Curtis as their new manager, the women tread the tricky road to super-stardom and must evolve constantly to continue selling records. Given Curtis' opportunistic nature and the group's naivete, professional and personal relationships soon blur, which naturally affects the whole group. Effie, the most straightforward of the three, naturally speaks her mind when things don't go her way. This sparks a feud—a commonplace occurrence with rising music groups—that soon forces her to go on a different path.

Hudson, recent Oscar supporting actress winner, memorably portrays Effie. The erstwhile "American Idol" contestant captivates in numbers that require her to become the embodiment of the betrayed diva, especially with her soulful, heartfelt rendition of "And I Am Telling You (I Am Not Going)."

From here, it will be interesting to see if she fares just as well with roles that don't require her to sing. But Effie is like a force of nature here.

The other cast members don't disappoint, either. Knowles as the Diana Ross-ish songstress Deena effectively gives a defined contrast to her friend-turned-rival and superdiva Effie. And there's Murphy, of course, who gives the gyrating, gesticulating Early a mesmerizing wildness, as well as a tender, desperate side. His struggles as an artist are quite relevant; he eventually breaks free of the mundane pop material by performing a "message song" reflective of the era's cultural and political upheavals.

Pleasurable experience

Failing at becoming an inspiring force, he succumbs to his weaknesses, just as some stars who can't survive without the adulation. Meanwhile, Foxx's serious portrayal of Curtis, whose growth as a well-versed but controlling manager, is quite interestingly mapped.

Such believable transformations and interactions, together with adeptly performed song numbers, definitely help make "Dreamgirls" an unusually pleasurable and entertaining experience.

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 HAPPY HEARTS	2 300	3 SIQUIJOR: MYSTIC ISLAND	4 PATHFINDER			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BECAUSE I SAID SO	2 PATHFINDER	3 THX DREAMGIRLS GUARANTEED SEATS				
	4 NOTES ON A SCANDAL	5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	6 300	7 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS			
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 300		2 BECAUSE I SAID SO				
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX DREAMGIRLS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS				
	3 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PATHFINDER GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BECAUSE I SAID SO GUARANTEED SEATS				
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS		2 DREAMGIRLS				
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	5 PATHFINDER				
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M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 HAPPY HEARTS		2 SIQUIJOR: MYSTIC ISLAND				
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 300	5 PATHFINDER				

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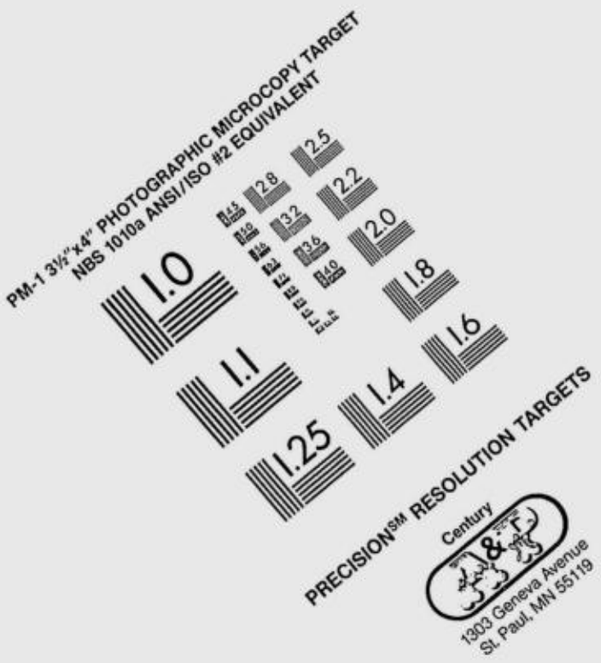

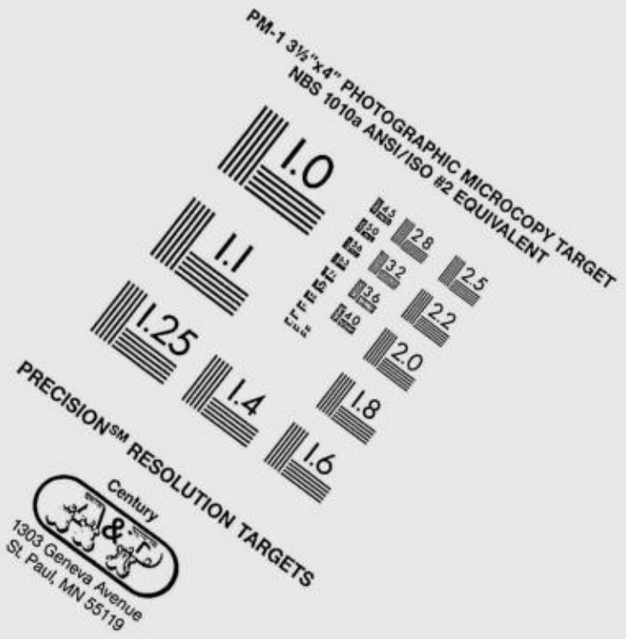

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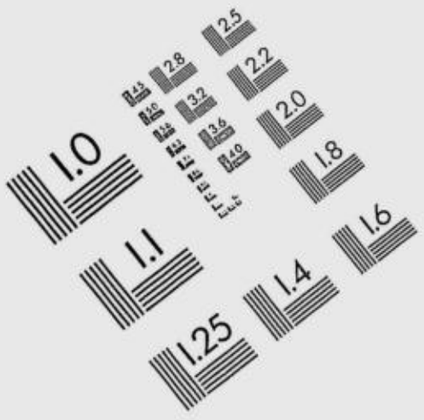

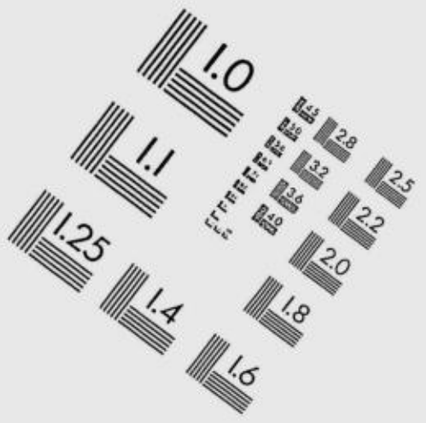

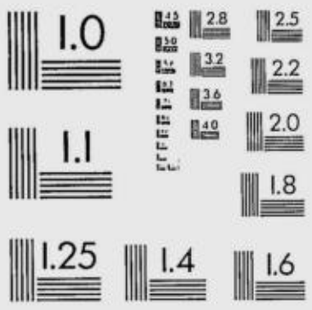

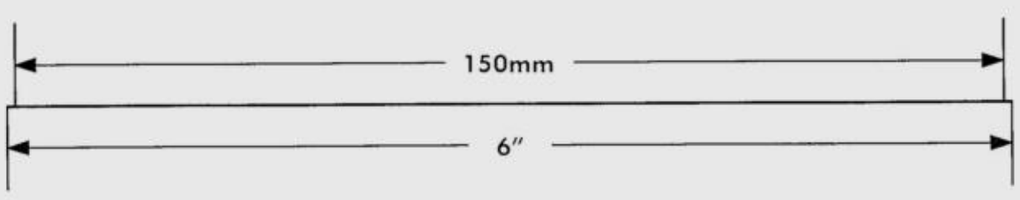

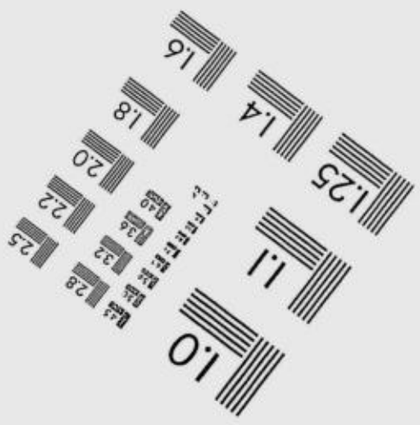

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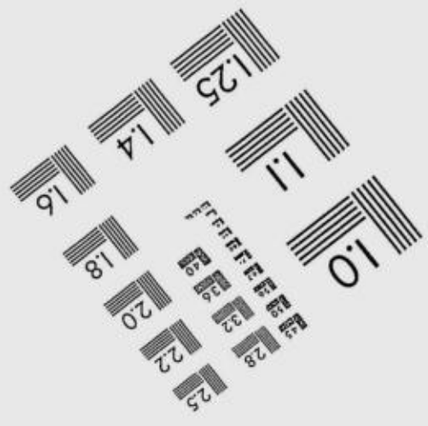

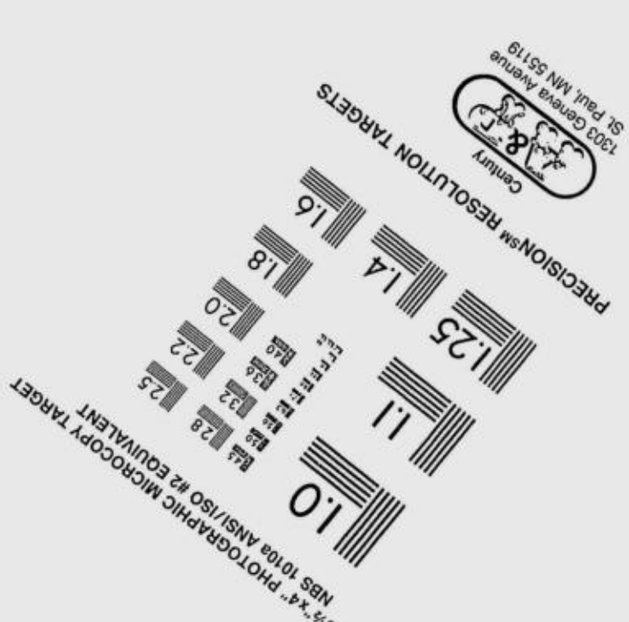

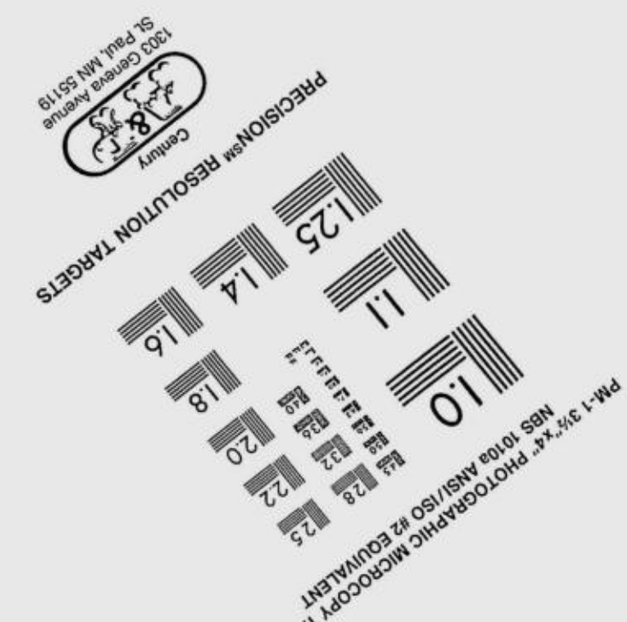

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MARCH

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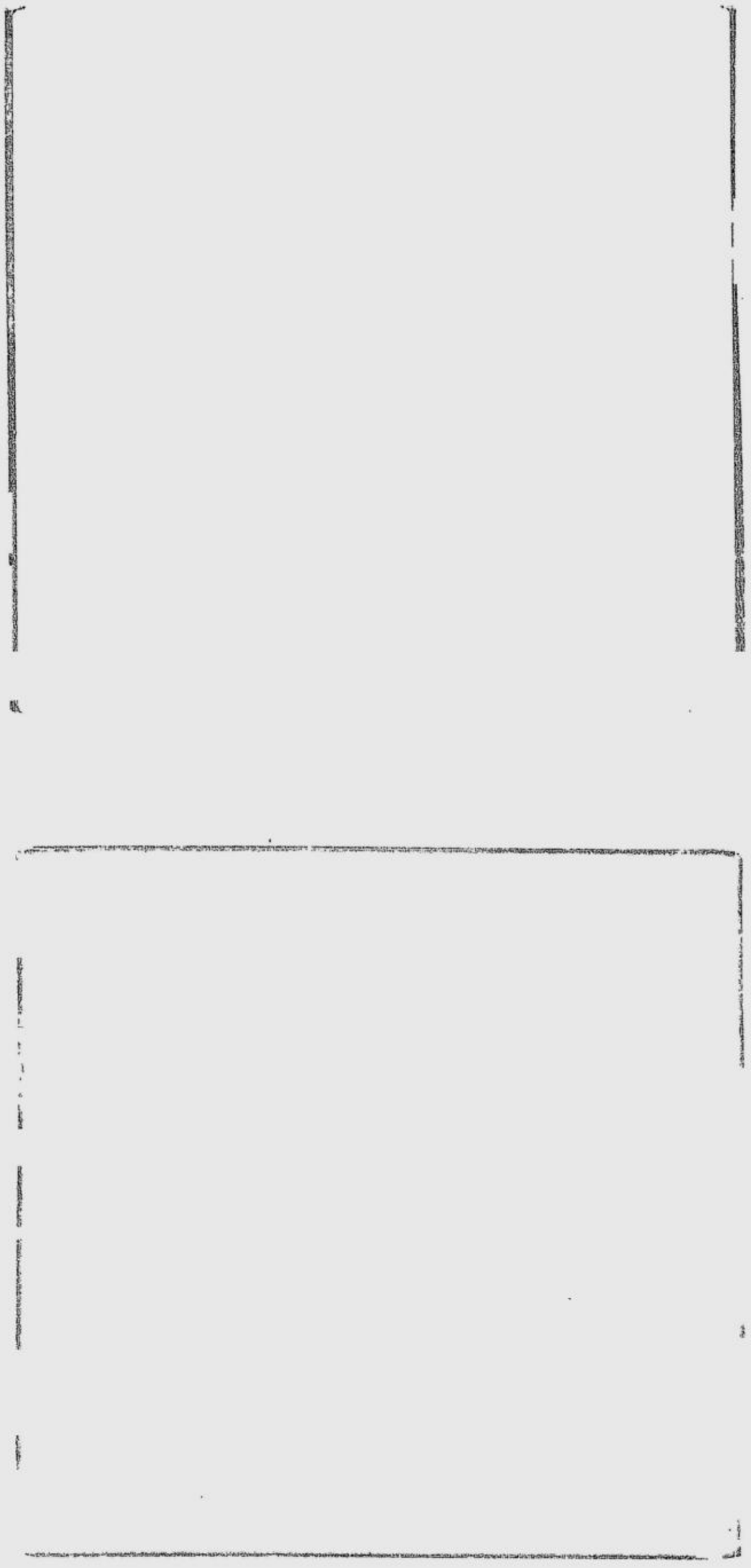
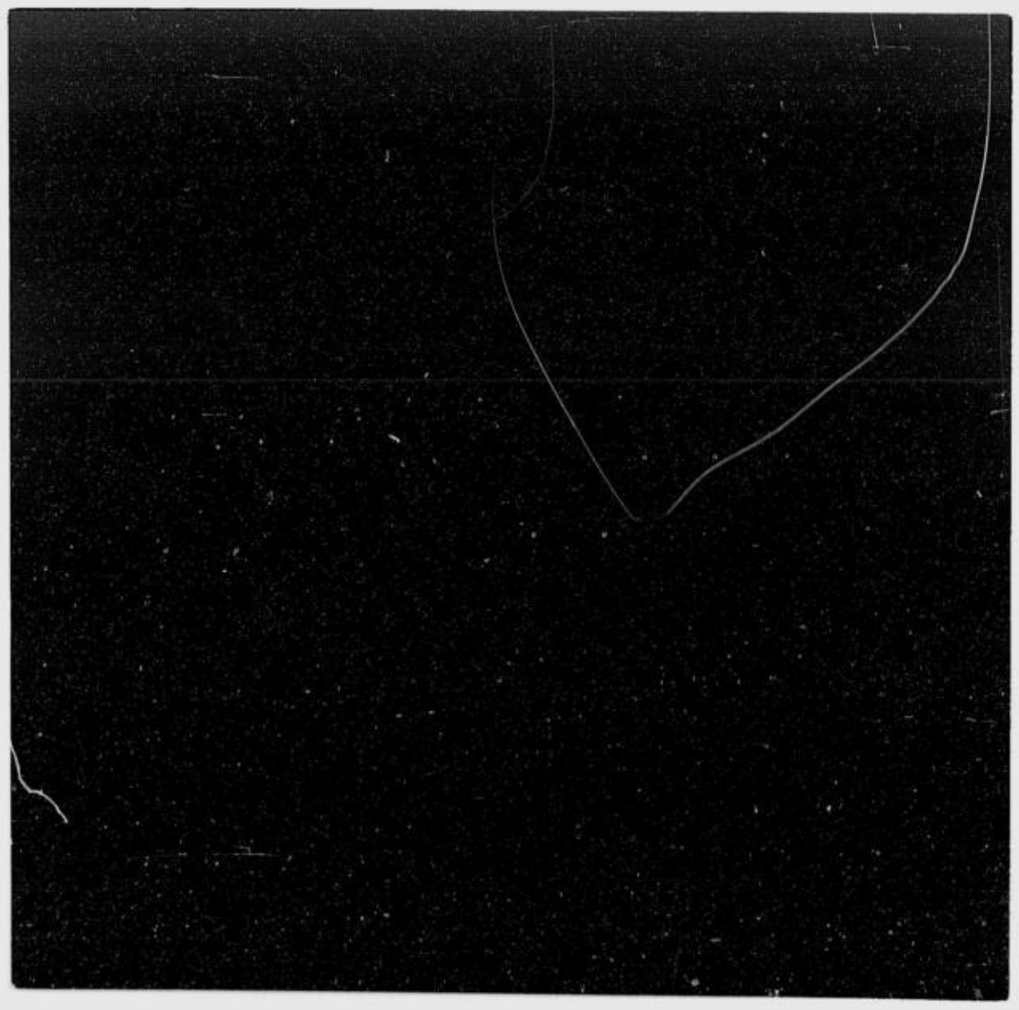
MARCH

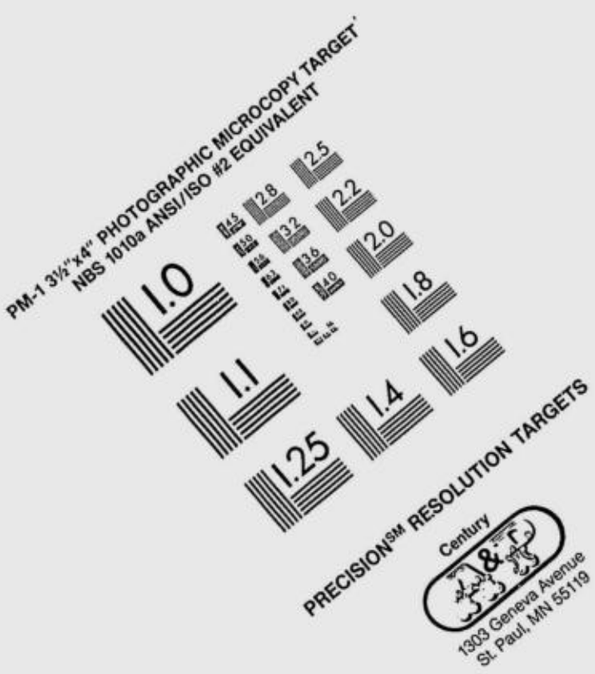
16 THRU 31

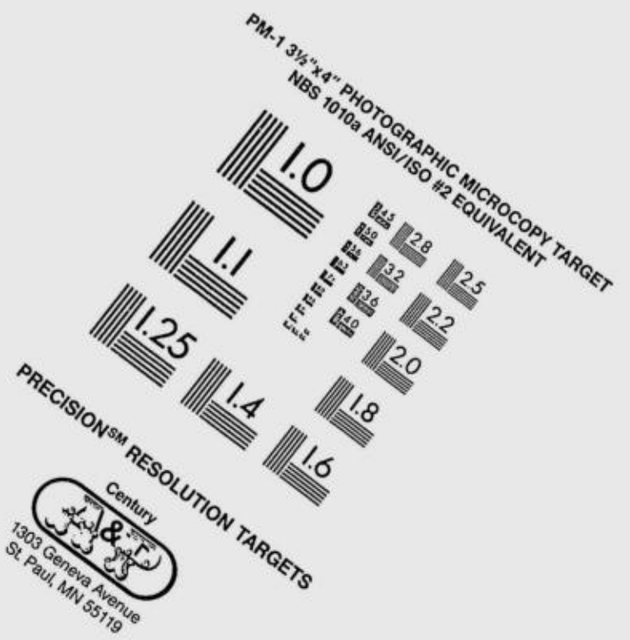
2007

REEL 401









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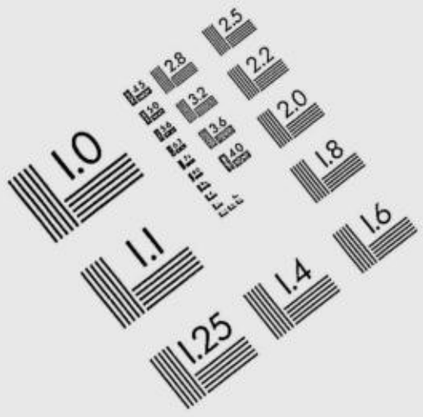

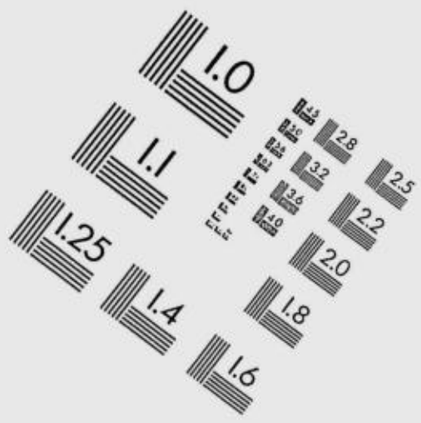

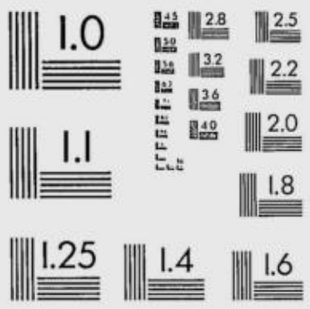

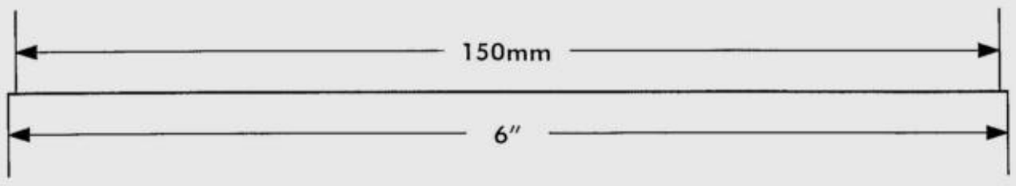

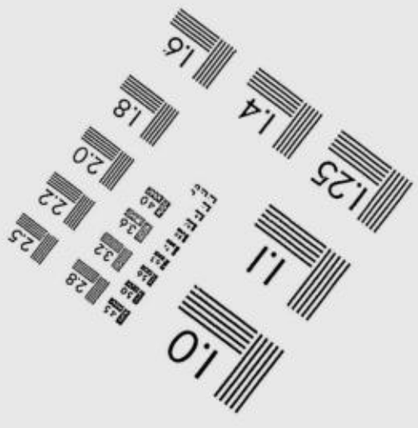

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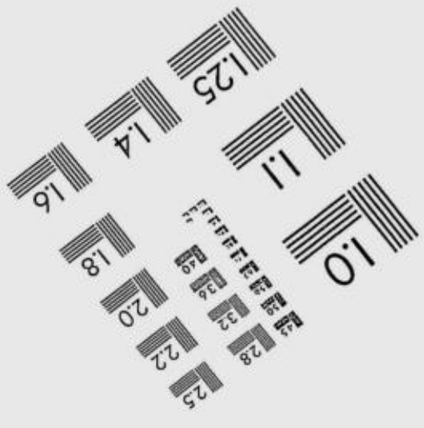
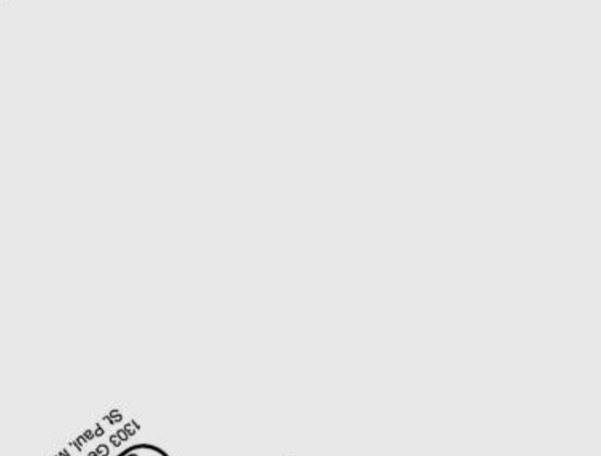




LIFESTYLE/ F1

LV designer, Marc Jacobs, goes into rehab for drug abuse after 7 years of sobriety

BUSINESS / B1

OFW remittances up 20% in January

BUSINESS / B1

Toyota to invest P5.6B in RP to expand Laguna plant

LIVING STARS / I1

Sheryn Regis lives in home full of Barbies

Chief Justice warns poll fraud will split country

CHIEF JUSTICE REYNATO PUNO WARNED THAT any cheating in the May 14 elections could further divide the country.

"An election that lacks credibility for any reason whatsoever will further tear asunder our unity, and there is no prophet who can pinpoint to us with certainty the breakpoint of our unity," Puno said in a speech before the Publishers Association of the Philippines Inc. at the Manila Hotel on Wednesday.

CHIEF JUSTICE/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, March 16, 2007 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 97 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

MILF denies link to illegal drugs

THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT YESterday slammed a US claim that the MILF was involved in the production of illegal drugs and accused certain Philippine officials of trying to sabotage its peace talks with the government.

Rear Admiral Paul Zukunft, the head of a US antidrug task force in Southeast Asia, on Wednesday said that millions of dollars generated from the illegal drug trade may be finding its way into the

MILF DENIES/ A8

US raps GMA on killings

A SPECIAL HEARING of a US Senate panel probes the killings of leftists and journalists in the Philippines and looks for ways to help end the violence. Testimony heard on Wednesday were, from left, lawyer Edre Olalia of Counsels for Defense of Civil Liberties; Fr. Joe Dizon of Workers Assistance Center; Marie Hilao-Enriquez of Karapatan; Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, Ecumenical Bishops' Forum; Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes, National Council of Churches of the Philippines; Bishop Solito Toquero, United Methodist Church; Bishop Eleazer Pascua, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and Amirah Lidasan, Moro Christian Peoples Alliance. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Officials want American, int'l donations tied to RP rights record

"DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES": The wives of four coaccused in the multiple murders that happened in Leyte more than 20 years ago hold a press briefing on Thursday—but not on Wisteria Lane—to condemn "professional witch-hunters" out to get their husbands. From left: Linda Lacaba-Echanis, Fides Lim-Ladlad, Bobbie Malay and Lualhati Roque-Baylosis. JOAN BONDOC

WASHINGTON—THE BUSH ADministration on Wednesday said Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had not done enough to deal with security forces under her command who were allegedly involved in extrajudicial killings.

Eric John, US deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asia, praised Ms Arroyo for making efforts in recent months to stop the killings.

But he also told the Senate foreign relations subcommittee on Asia that Ms Arroyo was ultimately responsible for the actions of the security forces and for the rise in attacks on people speaking out against her administration.

Philippine rights groups estimate that more than 830 activists have been killed since 2001, when Ms Arroyo became president. The INQUIRER count is 295.

"Until these numbers come drastically down, though, I don't think you can determine that it's enough," John said when asked if Ms Arroyo's actions had been sufficient.

"As the ultimate authority in the chain of command, she has to take the steps to solve any involvement by members of the security forces."

Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer asked John whether the United States should link its infusions of military aid to improvement in the country's human rights record. "It's really important that we do not have blood on our hands in this country," she said.

"Our approach is that tying legislation to assistance money can be counterproductive," John replied.

A former senior US diplomat at the hearing questioned Ms Arroyo's capability to take steps to end the extrajudicial killings, saying she has become "politically weak" since her controversial election in 2004 and banked on military support.

"While we all hope the killings will stop im-

US RAPS/ A10

US SEN. BARBARA BOXER, Senate panel chair: It remains to be seen if the Philippine government's assurances ... will be followed by real and tangible actions. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fugitive lawmaker 'testifies' in style—through YouTube

By Christian V. Esguerra

HOW DOES A "FUGITIVE" LAWMAKER "PARticipate" in a congressional inquiry thousands of miles away?

With an arrest warrant hanging over his head, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo did it in style—through a YouTube broadcast.

The 67-year-old party-list lawmaker, wanted for his alleged involvement in the so-called communist purges in the 1980s, used the popular video-sharing website to reach the US Senate foreign relations subcommittee on Asia, which is looking into the political killings in the Philippines.

Dressed in a white *barong* Tagalog, he spoke in an 18-minute video that provided an overview of the killings of political activists and journalists and assailed the Arroyo administration for its alleged repressive actions against progressive political parties like Bayan Muna.

FUGITIVE/ A10

'I was responsible for 9/11,' al-Qaida's No. 3 man confesses

WASHINGTON—KHALID SHEIKH MOHAMMED, BELIEVED to have been the No. 3 al-Qaida leader, has confessed to masterminding the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States and a string of other terrorist acts during a military hearing at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, according to a transcript released by the Pentagon on Wednesday.

"I was responsible for the 9/11 operation from A to Z," Mohammed said in a rambling statement that was read during the closed-door session on Saturday.

In her book, "Seeds of Terror," Maria Ressa, then CNN bureau chief in Indonesia, writes that Mohammed (also known as KSM) plotted the 9/11 attacks in the Philippines in 1994. *(See story on Page A17.)*

In the transcript, Mohammed said his actions were part of a military campaign. "I'm not happy that 3,000 had been killed in America. I feel sorry even. I don't like to kill children and the kids," he added. "The language of war is victims."

The transcript also lays out the evidence against Mohammed, saying that a computer seized during his capture in 2003 included detailed information about the Sept. 11 plot—ranging from the names and photos of the hijackers to photos of hijacker Mo-

I WAS/ A17

Now, leftists welcome American 'imperialists' meddling

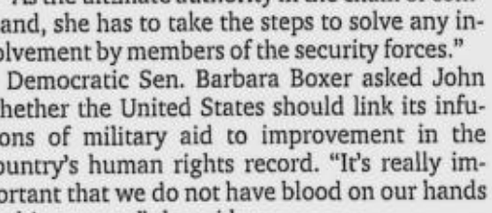
By Jerome Aning

FILIPINO LEFTISTS USED TO BE STRIDENT CRITICS of the United States' "imperialistic meddling." Now they are all praise for American lawmakers' attempts to intervene to stop the alleged murders of political activists in the Philippines.

Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) and Anakpawis yesterday welcomed calls made during a US Senate panel hearing on Wednesday for the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo to take tougher action against security forces allegedly involved in extrajudicial executions. *(Story above.)*

"Only with the prosecution and conviction of masterminds and operatives of the political killings can it

NOW/ A10



Roco charisma working for Sonia

By Norman Bordadora

SONIA ROCO OF THE GENUINE Opposition thinks her campaign promise to continue her late husband's unfinished mission is the reason she was the biggest gainer in the latest Pulse Asia survey of the senatorial candidates' chances in the May elections.

Indeed, at campaign rallies and people's forums and in her television ads, Roco's constant declaration is to fulfill the dream of the late senator, education secretary and two-time presidential candidate of having at least one

ROCO/ A8

Palace: Improving economy lifts GMA rating

By Michael Lim Ubac, Doris C. Dumlao and Jerome Aning

THE IMPROVING ECONOMY, INCLUDING A lower unemployment rate, is helping President Macapagal-Arroyo's approval rating to inch up, according to Malacañang.

The country's unemployment rate eased to 7.8 percent of the labor force in January from 8.1 percent a year ago as the robust services sector overshadowed job cuts in the volatile farm sector, the National Statistics Office (NSO) reported yesterday.

But Metro Manila and Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon) registered a double-digit unemployment rate, at 12.7 percent and 10.4 percent, respectively.

The underemployment rate in January remained high at 21.5 percent, up slightly from 21.1 percent a year ago, according to the NSO.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the plunge in Ms Arroyo's ratings seemed to have already bottomed out.

"We have our own internal polls that show the same trend confirming increased optimism and hope flowing from an improved economy," he said.

Bunye told reporters that he was happy about a survey by the Social Weather Stations last month that found Ms Arroyo's net satisfaction rating had gone up to minus 4 percent (39 percent satisfied and 43 percent dissatisfied) from minus 13 percent.

PALACE/ A8

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FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/15/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Opposition party will be minority, Comelec declares

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON Elections announced yesterday that an opposition-allied political party would be conferred dominant minority party status, ending weeks of speculation on whether or not the opposition will get a copy of the election returns.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said this was the position that the Comelec en banc has adopted even though the law speaks of a dominant minority—not dominant opposition—party because "we want to preserve the [principle of] check and balance."

Eight not six, copies

Abalos spoke to reporters after a hearing yesterday on the accreditation of the six political parties that would be allowed to field poll watchers at the voting precincts on May 14.

"We're now confident that the opposition will be given a copy of the election returns. We will have to talk among ourselves in the opposition who will get it," said opposition lawyer Sixto Brillantes who represents the United Opposition, the Nationalist People's Coalition and the Nacionalista Party.

Brillantes pointed out, however, that there should be eight, not six, political parties that should be accredited for poll watching, citing Section 34 of RA 9369, or the Automated Election System Act that was passed only last January.

The eight political parties, including the dominant majority party and the dominant minority party, would be entitled to get copies of the election returns, he said.

At the hearing, the Comelec en banc also urged both the administration- and opposition-allied parties to agree among themselves which of their coalesced parties they would consider dominant majority or dominant minority to save the Comelec the "trouble of doing the mathematical computation."

Brillantes said the UNO was the only registered political coalition for the 2007 elections and the rest are only political parties.

The factors to be considered in determining the dominant majority and dominant minority parties include the record of their participation in the previous elections, the number of incumbent officials belonging to them and their ability to fill up candidates' slates down to the municipal level.

The dominant majority party will be given the fifth copy of the election returns while the dominant minority party will be given the sixth copy.

The poll watchers of the six Comelec-accredited political parties would sign the ERs and would be furnished a copy of the certificates of canvass (COC).

The commissioners also agreed for the political parties' lawyers to file their petition for accreditation five days after March 29, the deadline for the filing of candidacy certificates for local posts.

Lakas-CMD lawyer Raul Lambino said the ruling party agreed that the opposition coalition should be declared the dominant minority party.

A statement from Abalos that the dominant minority party status could be given to an administration-allied party alarmed the opposition.

Abalos explained that the law said "dominant minority party and not dominant opposition party."

Designated minority

At yesterday's hearing, Brillantes wanted it "put on the record" that Sec. 12 of RA 6646, or the Elections Reforms Law of 1987, referred to dominant ruling coalition and dominant opposition.

Despite the subsequent amendments to this law, Brillantes said that the reference to the opposition as the dominant minority party "has always been there."

He said that historically, in the 1998, 2001 and 2004 elections, it was always the opposition that was "designated" as the dominant minority party.

Only 12 of the 35 political parties that filed for a petition for accreditation to field poll watchers appeared at yesterday's hearing.

Aside from Lakas-CMD, UNO, NPC and the NP, those represented included Lapiang Manggagawa, Akbayan, Asenso Pilipino Party, Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), Liberal Party, Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP), and the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP).

Sandigan approves Atong Ang plea deal

By Jocelyn R. Uy

ASIDE FROM A POSH RESIDENCE IN UPSCALE Corinthian Gardens subdivision in Quezon City, the government has gained an ally in Charlie "Atong" Ang after the Sandiganbayan on Wednesday approved the plea bargain agreement he had struck with the antigraft court.

The Sandiganbayan's Special Division affirmed the deal that enabled Ang, a co-accused in the plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada, to plead to the lesser offense of corruption of a public official in relation to indirect bribery, which carries a six-year prison term. Plunder carries a life sentence.

In the plea bargain agreement, Ang promised to testify for the state in cases he "has personal knowledge of," and return to the government the P25 million he took from the P130 million in tobacco excise taxes that he had "diverted" to Estrada from the province of Ilocos Sur in 1998.

Ang surrendered his Corinthian Gardens home in lieu of the P25 million.

The court has scheduled his re-arraignment on the new charge on Monday at 9 a.m.

'Ambiguous' statements

The Special Division—which was created solely to hear the case against Estrada and his co-accused who include his son Sen. Jinggoy Estrada—okayed the plea deal five days after Ang's lawyers filed a clarification to Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo de Castro's rejoinder that the agreement appeared to contain "ambiguous" statements that tended to implicate Ang in the crime of plunder.

ANG

In approving the deal, De Castro and Associate Justices Francisco Villaruz Jr. and Diosdado Peralta said it was "timely filed and substantially conforms to the requirements of the law."

Ang through his lawyers, Alfredo Villamor and Ruth Castelo, filed the plea bargain agreement on Jan. 24 after he was arraigned on the plunder charge but before a trial could begin, the justices noted.

The court had ordered the entry of a not-guilty plea for Ang after he refused to enter a plea at his arraignment for plunder on Nov. 15, 2006. On the day of the pre-trial conference, the government prosecutors and Ang's lawyers jointly submitted the plea bargain agreement.

The Sandiganbayan clarified, however, that the plea bargain agreement concerned only Ang and could not be considered as admissible evidence against Estrada and the other accused.

Erap finds a way to campaign for GO

By Dona Pazzibugan

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA HAS found a way to campaign for the Genuine Opposition senatorial ticket that he himself has devised.

As a result of Estrada's initiative, his supporters have come out with copies of a video compact disc (VCD) containing his message endorsing the GO candidates.

Estrada, who is detained in his rest house estate in Tanay, Rizal, wanted his seven-minute message to be played in public gatherings during campaign sorties, GO campaign officials said.

Estrada lamented yesterday that he was again being used by Malacañang as a scapegoat to explain the "most corrupt country in Asia" rating of the Philippines in the latest corruption survey by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy.

Through his spokesman, former Immigration Commissioner Rufus Rodriguez, Estrada said President Macapagal-Arroyo was at the helm of government while he was already on his sixth year of incarceration.

"Why should President Estrada's name be dragged into this latest PERC survey when the Philippines' ranking went from bad to worst this year, when it went from second last year to the most corrupt this year?" Rodriguez said.

"The truth is, the impression of businessmen worldwide is that the Arroyo administration is tolerating and coddling the corruptors and thieves in government and the private sector because no one has been prosecuted on established glaring incidents of corruption since Mrs. Arroyo took office in 2001," Rodriguez said.

Estrada's VCD message, called "PJEE's (President Joseph Ejercito Estrada) Endorsement Speech," will be played in campaign sorties using the audio-visual vans used during the 2004 presidential run of the late action star Fernando Poe Jr.

Estrada's message was also played during the proclamation rally at the Plaza Miranda in Manila on Feb. 24.

Speaking in a mix of Filipino and English in his videotaped message, Estrada described the opposition candidates as people who could not be bribed.

"They are the only and real opposition, no more no less," he said. "I ask that you give them the same support that you continue to give me."

He also called on his supporters to guard against attempts to cheat in the elections.

Estrada had asked the Sandiganbayan to allow him to campaign for the GO ticket, but was turned down.

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Ambush victims not registered as Abra voters

THE MAN INJURED IN AN AMBUSH IN Manila on Tuesday could not have planned to run for town mayor in Abra because he was not a registered voter of the province, the office of election Commissioner Romeo Brawner clarified yesterday.

It was necessary to clarify the report because it might create the impression of a worsening peace and order situation that could be a prelude to a violent elections in the province, Belen Salespara-Carasig, Brawner's chief of staff, told reporters.

"We would like to believe that the peace and order situation in Abra remains stable," Carasig said.

"We are also making the clarification because some quarters might capitalize on the incident and claim it was similar to the killing of Rep. Luis Bersamin," she added.

It was reported yesterday that William Raymundo, one of the three people injured in the incident, was planning to run for mayor in Tubo, Abra.

Aside from Raymundo, Romeo Elveña and Zenaida Ober, were also wounded. Ober was said to be a mere bystander.

The lone fatality was identified as Ricardo Elveña.

But citing a report from the Provincial Election Supervisor, Carasig said that neither Raymundo nor the Elveñas was a registered voter of Abra.

"So, it would be impossible for any of them to run for mayor in Abra," Carasig said.

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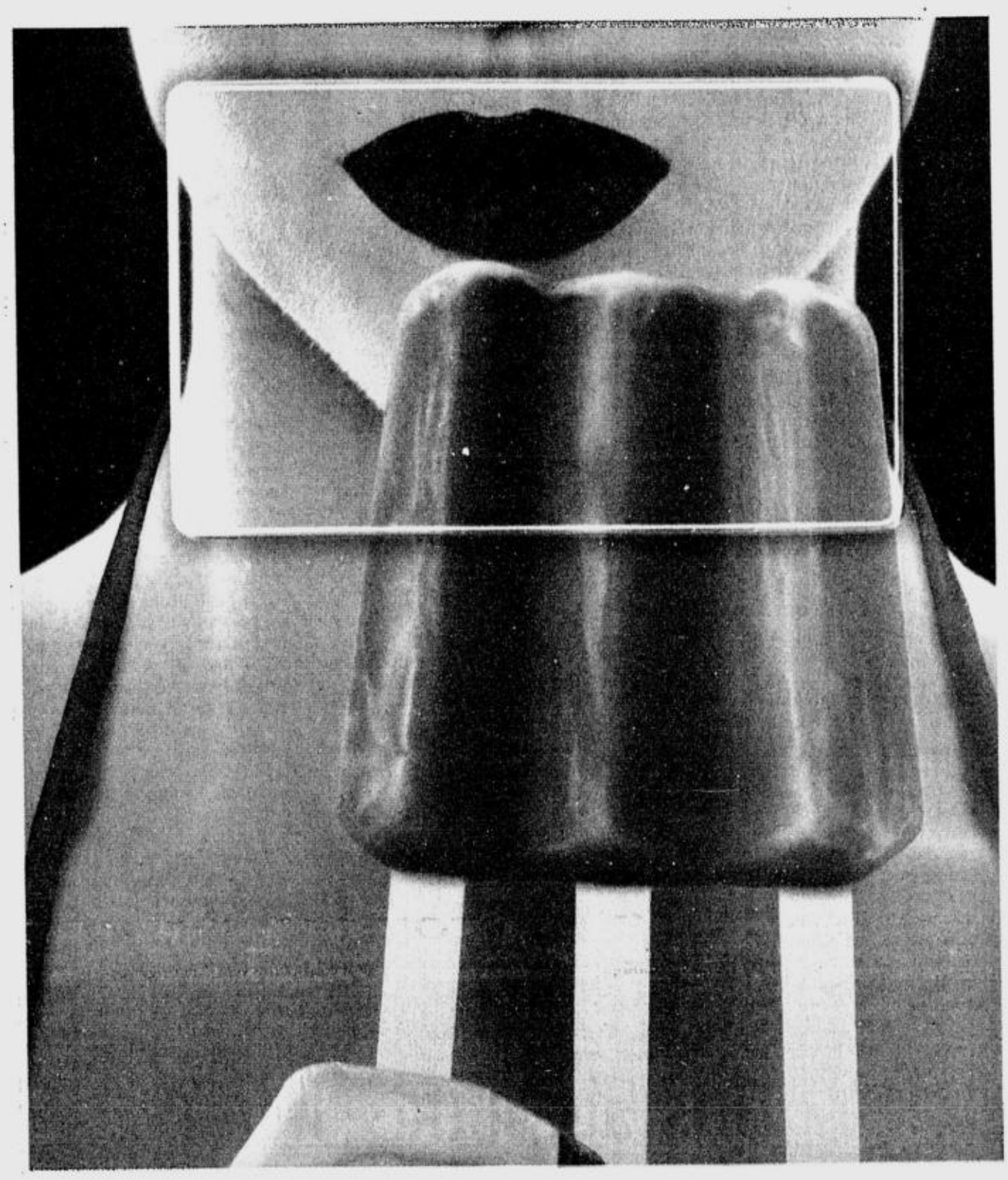

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Chavit wants Erap pardoned —after conviction

SINGSON

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ILOCOS SUR GOV. LUIS "CHAVit" Singson has no objection to a pardon for deposed President Joseph Estrada but said this should come only after the Sandiganbayan antigraft court has handed down its verdict on the plunder case against the disgraced leader.

However, Singson, whose denunciations of Estrada's corrupt ways precipitated his impeachment and ouster, is not ruling out a reconciliation with his former gambling buddy, saying he has a "soft heart" for even his bitterest enemies.

"The President can immediately pardon Estrada but only after the court case has been decided. What is important is that the case should be allowed to take its course because we have to show the public that there is justice in this country," he said.

Singson, who is running for senator in the administration's Team Unity ticket, said he was against granting a petition from Estrada to be given temporary liberty on recognizance because it would send the "wrong signal."

But right now, Singson has nothing good to say about Estrada whom he blames for the negative publicity that has intensified since he decided to run for the Senate.

Digging up dirt

"He is spending a lot of money just to make sure that I won't win or be disqualified," said Singson.

"If they can't find any new dirt against me, they dig up the old ones," he said.

Like the "jueteng lord" tag which has stuck to Singson ever since he admitted in the impeachment hearings that he personally delivered several "*bayong*" (native bags) of illegal gambling bribes to Estrada in Malacañang.

"I was never a jueteng lord. I was only used to deliver what Atong Ang [another Estrada gambling crony] was supposed to give to Erap. My only participation was I was used by the former President. I was just an accessory, everything was all set up," he said.

He blamed the Estrada camp for blowing up what he claimed was an "innocent act" when he allegedly chipped some money for a town raffle during one of his campaign sorties and for the ill-timed arrest of the Newsbreak editorial staff for a case he filed against them two years ago.

"I was willing to pay for their bail but I was told by my boys that I was being set up," he said.

Singson still bristles at the "brazen" attempt on his life in late 2000 when a police squad stopped his van.

"I knew then that he [Estrada] wanted me dead. If I had come out, they would surely have killed me," he said.

Singson admits that being known as the man behind the downfall of a President was both a boon and bane in his run for the Senate.

Life's challenge

"I could have run and won in 2001 even without campaigning. Who is Joker Arroyo? He won because of the impeachment? Who is Manny Villar? He won because of the impeachment," he said.

Singson said he did not seek a Senate seat then because he did not want to be seen as "taking advantage" of his status as whistleblower.

"It's more difficult now but that's the challenge of life. I'm running now because the governors want me to and I feel I can contribute something to this country. I'm confident I can win as long as they [governors] don't abandon me," he said.

Despite ranking a low 25th in the Social Weather Stations survey, Singson remains confident of his chances.

"I improved from 40 to 25. [Sen.] Jamby Madrigal was also 25 in the surveys but came out No. 4. I think my position is good enough," said Singson.

He said he expects people to vote for him because of his sincerity, his determination and his independence of mind.

But even if he fails to land a Senate seat, Singson said he believed he has already won for getting a second chance at life. Singson normally undergoes an executive check-up every June during his birthday but he decided to have a special examination after he decided to join Team Unity.

"They found a [stomach aneurysm], so it was a blessing in disguise, a gift of life. Winning in the election would be a bonus," said Singson.

Whistle-blower law

If he wins, Singson said he would push for the enactment of a whistle-blower law to encourage more witnesses to come out and expose corrupt practices in government and work for the decentralization of government finances to allow towns and provinces to retain most of their earnings for their own development.

Singson said he saw reconciliation with Estrada as a distinct possibility.

"I have always been good to all my political enemies, it's on record," said Singson citing the case of political rival Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo who was granted a pardon by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos who asked for Singson for his consent to the pardon.

Crisologo, who is now a Quezon City congressman, was given a double life sentence for burning down two villages in Ilocos Sur in 1970. He served out his sentence from 1976 to 1981 when he was pardoned by Marcos.

"But let us not go ahead of the courts, let the court decide who is right or wrong, guilty or not guilty. After that I'm ready for reconciliation," the governor said.

Court declares FG public figure, junks libel suit vs Chavez

By Allison W. Lopez

ARROYO

CHAVEZ

THE FIRST GENTLEMAN IS A public figure who has lost his right to privacy by virtue of the publicity generated by his being the husband of the President of the Philippines.

This was the salient point that emerged in the ruling by a Manila Regional Trial Court judge dismissing the libel complaint filed by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo against former Solicitor General Frank Chavez.

Judge Zenaida Daguna of Manila RTC Branch 19 ruled that "the First Gentleman, it cannot be denied, is a public figure."

"Well-settled is the rule that public figures have lost, to some extent, their right of privacy because of the following reasons—they had sought publicity and consented to it and so could not complain when they received it, and their personalities and affairs had become public and could no longer be regarded as their own private business."

More open to criticism

The judge also ruled that "the press had a privilege under the Constitution to inform the public about those who have become legitimate matters of public interest."

"The acts and lives of public figures are more open to criticism, comments and remarks," Daguna added.

The libel case stemmed from a series of stories in the INQUIRER written by Armand Nocum that referred to former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Jocjoc" Bolante as Arroyo's "bagman" in the disbursement of P728 million in agriculture funds, part of which was allegedly used to bankroll the election campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her allies in 2004.

Motion to dismiss

Chavez had filed a "motion to dismiss" the complaint on Feb. 9, saying there was no probable cause to charge him because the article in question was privileged communication. The court agreed and dismissed the complaint on March 8.

Among Chavez's statements that Arroyo had deemed libelous were:

- "I am giving them 24 hours to cooperate, lest I include them in the plunder charge, which is nonbailable."
- "This lopsided distribution of kickbacks had infuriated some local executives and congressmen, who were said to be willing to come up with the documents in connection with the Department of Agriculture's Ginintuang Masaganang Ani program."
- "Those who did not receive the funds or received little in commissions are making the biggest noise."

No probable cause

Daguna said Article 360 of the Revised Penal Code states that "a person who is not the author of an alleged article, or who has absolutely no participation in the publication of said article, cannot be indicted for libel."

The court also found no probable cause to indict Chavez for libel since the necessary parties—INQUIRER publisher, editors and reporter—were not included as respondents.

Lacking

The complaint, the judge said, was "patently defective" and for that reason alone "must be dismissed."

Daguna went on to say that even if there were no technical defects, there would still be no probable cause to indict Chavez because the essential elements for libel were "lacking."

Arroyo has several other libel cases against journalists, including from the INQUIRER, pending in the Manila RTC.

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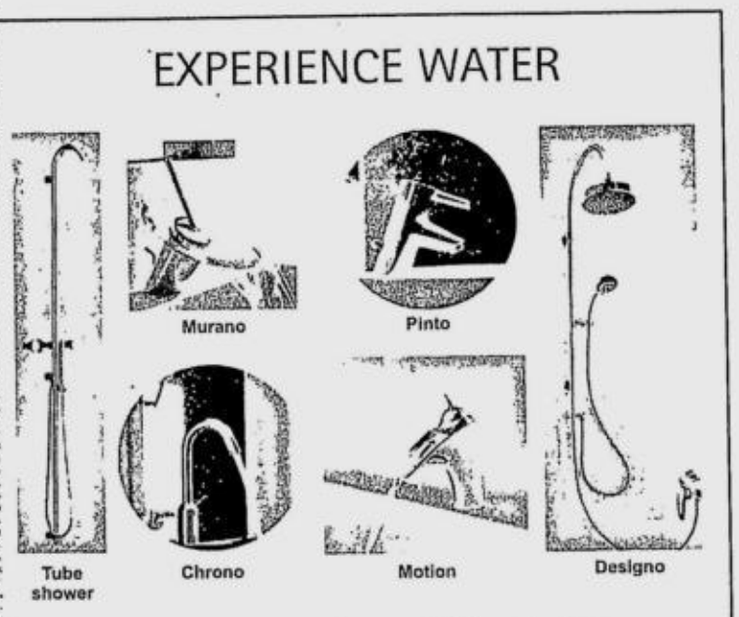

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Noynoy to speak at La Salle lecture

THE DE LA SALLE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS Ramon V. del Rosario Sr. Graduate School of Business will hold its second lecture of the Sen. Benigno S. Aquino Jr. Distinguished Professorial Chair in Corporate Responsibility and Governance, will be held tomorrow the new Br. Andrew Gonzalez Hall on Taft Avenue.

The lecture will be from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the 20th Floor.

Dr. Benito L. Teehankee will lecture on "Building Humanistic Corporations: Catholic Social Teaching and Corporate Governance."

Rep. Benigno C. "Noynoy" Aquino III, only son of Ninoy Aquino and a senatorial candidate in the coming, will be the reactor to the professorial chair lecture named after his father.

Teehankee, based on the abstract of his lecture, will discuss social and psychological dynamics within a corporation, "which tend to emphasize profits over people, thus harming human dignity and development in the long term. This contributes to the ever-widening gap, or better yet, a widening gorge, between the rich and poor."

Teehankee will also delve into "Catholic Social Teaching, with its emphasis on human dignity and the use of material resources in the service of integral human development, can provide useful inputs for corporate governance towards more humanistic corporations."

Hostage-taker acted alone, says girlfriend

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE GIRLFRIEND OF THE HOSTAGE-TAKER shot dead by the police after hours of standoff drama at the Taguig City Hall of Justice herself faces trouble.

Delia dela Cruz, the live-in partner of slain suspect Almario Villegas, will be charged with kidnapping and serious illegal detention for aiding Villegas throughout the hostage drama, according to police authorities.

Dela Cruz denied that she was an accomplice, claiming that Villegas had acted on his own.

"I myself was threatened by him with his gun," Dela Cruz told investigators.

Villegas on Tuesday afternoon held at gunpoint two court employees, a lawyer and the plaintiff in a property foreclosure case involving Dela Cruz, after the former blew his top during the proceedings.

Held captive inside the courtroom of Branch 266 of the Hall of Justice were court stenographer Liwanag Saloma, clerk of court Donna Dunuan, plaintiff Gina Ramos and lawyer Frederick Ballesteros.

After nearly 24 hours of on-and-off talks, the negotiating team was able to persuade Villegas to free his victims.

The team was headed by Taguig police chief Alfred Corpus, and included Taguig Mayor Sigfrido "Freddie" Tinga and Vice Mayor George Elias and other top-ranking police officers.

Villegas was supposed to drive to Cubao with a policeman after receiving P1.3-million in cash under a deal reached with negotiators.

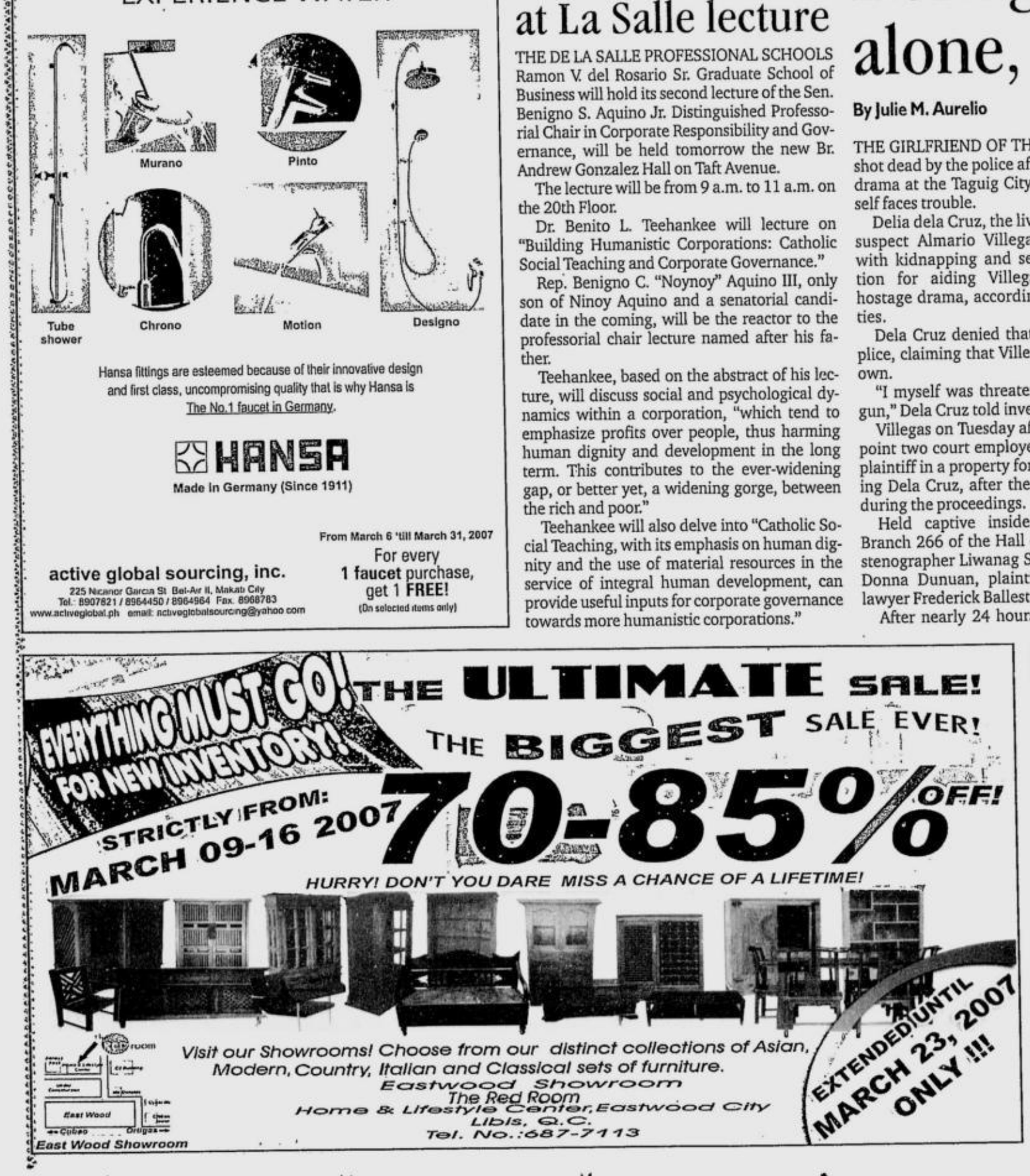
Members of the Taguig SWAT team were able to engage Villegas in a gunfight when he tried to pursue his fleeing captives.

Villegas, an ex-Marine and movie stuntman, sustained several gunshots wounds and died after a hand grenade he was holding slipped from his grasp and exploded.

The four captives and Dela Cruz were unharmed. Dela Cruz was brought to the headquarters of the Taguig city police.

Case investigator PO1 Melvin Garcia said there was enough proof to charge Dela Cruz with conspiracy in the hostage-taking.

"We even recovered a switch-blade from Dela Cruz," Garcia said, adding that the police would also charge Dela Cruz with illegal possession of a bladed weapon.



Corrections

IN THE MARCH 11 ISSUE, the caption of a front-page photo misstated the province where Silay City is located. Silay City is in Negros Occidental — not Negros Oriental.

* * *

IN THE MARCH 14 ISSUE, the headline of a front-page story—"1,387 donated tents for Bicol lying unused—DSWD"—misstated the number of tents still "under the custody" of local government units. There are only 386—not 1,387—donated tents lying unused in LGUs.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

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Parties don't connect with most Pinoys – SWS

By Kate Pedroso

ABOUT TWO IN THREE ADULT Filipinos believe that "no political party truly promotes their welfare," a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations conducted with the Ateneo School of Government and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation showed.

Only 27 percent of those surveyed identified some political party that did promote the people's welfare, and they can be considered "party-leaning."

Dennis Gonzalez, associate dean of the Ateneo School of Government, said in analyzing the survey, "The low percentage of Filipinos that are party-leaning suggests that the parties have not sufficiently informed, inspired and persuaded the citizenry about their political visions, policies and platforms."

The study also found that party-shifting seemed to be "widely accepted" as nearly half (49 percent) of the respondents said that it was "neither bad nor right." One in three respondents (35 percent) said that party-switching was "bad," while only 15 percent said switching was right.

Insufficient party discipline

"It is probable that insufficient party discipline and the propensity of many politicians to switch parties lessen party ability to persuade and inspire citizens to support party visions and policies," Gonzalez said in his paper, "Priorities for Parties: Mass Membership and Political Education."

"But in turn the high plurality of citizens (49 percent) who are neutral or indifferent to party-switching does not encourage political leaders to strengthen party discipline," he added.

Of those who believed that party switching was "always/usually bad," majority (81 percent) said turncoats should be punished through the imposition of fines or removal from post.

The study also found that the connection between parties and politicians was "very weak," as three in four respondents (75 percent) either said "none" or "don't know" when asked to mention politicians who came to mind in connection with specific parties.

"This low awareness suggests that politicians do insufficient public promotion of their parties," Gonzalez said.

Meanwhile, LAKAS-CMD emerged as the party "which is appreciated most," as it was the top choice when respondents were asked to identify a party that possessed enumerated favorable characteristics and capabilities.

Favorable characteristics include doing "many things that benefit the citizens," having noble leaders and a realistic platform, and interaction with many sectors, among others. Capabilities referred to the party's capacity to address economic problems, fight graft and corruption and promote peace and order, among others.

Political education

Gonzalez also pointed out that the most preferred reason for party membership was the opportunity for political education, as one in three (35 percent) said they would join a political party "to learn more about politics."

"The responses suggest that the parties will strengthen themselves and their support from the grass roots by engaging in recruitment and educational activities," Gonzalez said.

Noting that political parties "are mere electoral vehicles of politicians during the campaign period and their friendship clubs outside the election season," Gonzalez also recommended that parties should recruit more non-politicians like professionals, small entrepreneurs and private sector employees from class D, which emerged as the class with the most interest in political education.

The survey was conducted from Nov. 24 to 26 using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 statistically representative households (300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao). It had a margin of error of plus-minus 3 percentage points.

2 Bicol lawmakers linked to P250-M port scam – Ping

REELECTIONIST SEN. PANFILO Lacson yesterday claimed two administration officials had benefited from a P250-million port project in Albay and a multimillion-peso river dredging project in the Bicol region.

Lacson, however, would only identify the two as an incumbent lawmaker who is seeking reelection and a former legislator who is now in the Cabinet.

Citing reports, Lacson said corruption had resulted in the substandard P250-million Pantao regional port project and the access roads that lead to it.

He said the port was washed away and the access roads were "pulverized" by the recent subsequent typhoons that hit Bicol.

He said the river-dredging project would have protected Bicolanos from the floodwaters brought by Typhoons "Reming" and "Milenyo" but it proved useless.

"People made a windfall from this. Residents of Bicol are still suffering from the effects of Milenyo and Reming, yet some officials are said to have pocketed funds for the two projects. It's like vultures feeding on carcasses," Lacson said.

"I intend to get to the bottom of this. Once elected, I will initiate a Senate investigation into the matter. I will also write the Department of Public Works and Highways to seek an update on the status and the source of funding for the two projects," he said. *Norman Bordadora*

2 bets open to scrapping of Senate

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TWO SENATORIAL CANDIDATES from opposing camps visited the Senate yesterday and declared that they were open to the abolition of the very office they are coveting.

"Eventually, for the sake of national interest, and I am intellectually convinced that we should do that, I have no problem. I am willing to sacrifice," said Michael Defensor, who is running in the administration's Team Unity, at the Kapihan sa Senado.

Genuine Opposition candidate Alan Peter Cayetano declared: "I'll join Mike, if it is for the country and the majority of the people believe that the abolition of the Senate will be good."

They were asked whether they would be willing to give up their position, assuming they win on May 14, should advocates for Charter change succeed.

But Cayetano said that President Macapagal-Arroyo, whom he has accused of cheating to win in 2004, should also resign.

"I don't believe that it will be good for the country if the Senate is gone and she is still there," he said.

Aside from allegedly continuing to cover up the cheating in the 2004 polls, Cayetano said the President remained in denial of the worsening corruption under her administration.

Cayetano said the President could not dismiss the report of the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy survey, which ranked the Philippines as the most corrupt country in Asia, as "based on old data" because she has been in office for six years.

PUBLISH ASIA 2007

Print media bigwigs coming

By Allison W. Lopez

IT'S THE BIGGEST "EYEBALL" event for publishing bigwigs from all over Asia.

More than 400 delegates from the leading international newspapers and some 300 CEOs, editors and writers are expected to attend the Publish Asia 2007 conference to be held from March 27 to 28 at the Manila Hotel.

Organized by Ifra Asia, Publish Asia is being held for the first time in the Philippines. It met for the past six years in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore. Ifra is the Asian counterpart of a global organization for media publishing.

Publish Asia is touted as the region's No. 1 networking platform. The theme of this year's conference is "Reinventing for Today's Business, Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges."

Participants will tackle the challenges that the print media faces today, among them the "threat" of alternative media like the Internet.

Ifra Asia managing director Elaine Wong said members of the media would benefit greatly from the conference, which will discuss among other topics, newsroom management, business and advertising strategies, circulation, readership and audience.

"We try to make our issues relevant and as practical as possible so they can actually implement these strategies in their own organizations," she said.

Barbie Atienza, Ifra Philippines committee member, said it was also a chance for members of the media to exchange ideas.

"We're not only there to pick up ideas but also to share them," said Atienza.

He cited how INQUIRER President Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, a member of the Ifra Asia-Pacific regional committee, showed how SMS (short messaging system) was being used to complement news media in the Philippines.

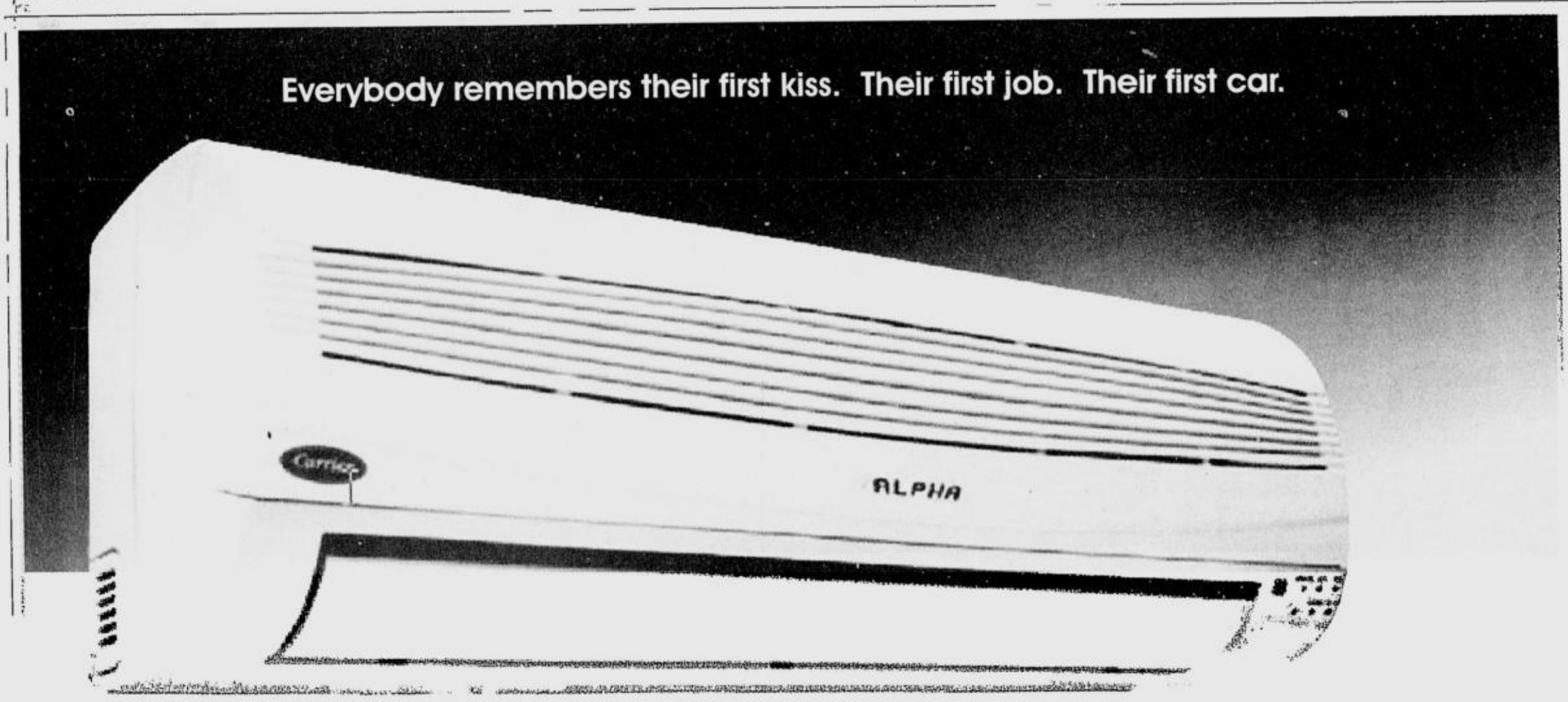
A highlight of the conference is the 6th annual Asia Media Awards 2007, which will honor print media outfits for being the Best in Design, Best in Infographics, Best in Print, Best in Newspaper Supplement and Best in Photojournalism.

Another must-see is the Expo featuring the industry's top technology and service providers who will present their latest products and services.

In the lineup of activities are a golf tournament, a "Walk the Wall" tour of Intramuros, and cultural presentations.

"This is the biggest newspaper event in the country," said Atienza as he urged members of the local media to participate.

For more information, visit www.publishasia.com or call 5245059.



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No more recycled budget, Joe de V vows

THERE WILL BE NO MORE RE-ENACTED national budget from hereon to ensure the continuity of the government's anti-poverty program, according to Speaker Jose de Venecia.

De Venecia gave this assurance to more than 1,000 municipal mayors at the two-day League of Municipalities island cluster conference at the Manila Hotel on Tuesday.

The Speaker challenged the municipal mayors, whom he called the front-liners of government in the fight against poverty, to transform the countryside into beehives of economic activity and follow the phenomenal growth of localities in China that helped to fuel the rise of China into a global economic powerhouse.

"In the same manner, I urge you to support the programs and projects of the Arroyo administration to fuel the fire that will transform the entire Philippine countryside into a beehive of economic and livelihood activity," De Venecia said.

He said the phenomenal countryside development in China was the result of the support from local governments.

This year's P1.126 trillion national appropriations—the first trillion-peso spending measure for the country—will be signed into law later this month by President Arroyo to activate the funding and the releases of the local government units' share of the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA).

De Venecia, national president of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, the country's most dominant party, told the mayors the spending measure reflected a significant increase in the IRA shares of LGUs.

From P166 billion last year, the IRA shares jumped to P183 billion, a P17-billion increase which De Venecia said would be adequate to finance rural infrastructure and provide services to the people.

"I am proud to tell you that we have toiled hard to accomplish our job, recognizing that you, the mayors, depend largely on the IRA for the continued operations of your respective municipalities," De Venecia said.

The Speaker blamed the Senate for the non-passage of the national budget for three consecutive years that greatly jeopardized the efficient delivery of basic social services in the local level.

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Baguio arts fest set April 16-28

A CULTURAL TRADITION IN THE COUNTRY's summer capital returns with the Summer Arts Festival sponsored by the University of the Philippines Baguio on Governor Pack Road, Baguio City.

As part of the Summer Extension Program of the UPB College of Arts and Communication, the festival will run on April 16-28 with workshops in visual arts and crafts, performance arts, film and photography, and language and literary arts.

These workshops and facilitators are lined up for April 16-21: drawing and cartooning, Madonna Obusa; earth art, Roberto Acosta; book binding, Delfin Tolentino Jr.; mosaic making, Katti Sta. Ana; pop singing, Ben Tapang; voice and diction, Joy Abellada and Rebecca Costales; children's theater, Faye Abalos; street dance, Amer Amor; digital photography and imaging, Bagyo Productions; film appreciation, Ed Cabagnot; scriptwriting for radio and TV, Dennis Gutierrez; and seminar-workshop on grammar, Jonathan Malicsi and Galileo Zafra.

During the same week, an intensive English language workshop for foreigners (Koreans, Taiwanese, etc.) will be conducted by Ruby Jimenez and Ria Guzman.

For the week April 23-28, the workshops and facilitators are: painting, Norman Chow; paper art, Sinag de Leon-Amado; ethnic musical instruments, Arvin Villalon; Cordillera dances, Lynette Bibal and Perry Dafun; creative dramatics for teachers, Mae Barros; acting for beginners, Alex Cortez; short film production, Bagyo Productions; community journalism, Rolando Fernandez; and children's creative writing, Babeth Lolarga.

On April 24-27, Tanghal Tula for teachers will be offered by the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and the UPB-National Commission on Culture and the Arts' First Cordillera Creative Writing Workshop will be held.

For inquiries and reservations, call or text 0917-5060080 or 0910-6725846.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, March 16, 2007
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Hos 14:2-10
Gospel: Mark 12:28-34

A teacher of the Law had been listening to this discussion and admired how Jesus answered them. So he came up and asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?"

Jesus answered, "The first is: Hear, Israel! The Lord, our God, is One Lord; and you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. And after this comes another one: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these two."

The teacher of the Law said to him, "Well spoken, Master; you are right when you say that he is one and there is no other. To love him with all our heart, with all our understanding and with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves is more important than any burnt offering or sacrifice."

Jesus approved this answer and said, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Commentary

God is pleading again! Return and I will forgive you, heal you, love you freely! In fact God will be like dew, making us blossom, putting roots down deep, giving fruit and shade. Are we those who walk the just path and are wise, or are we sinners who stumble in the path of God? We are more than halfway through Lent. What are we doing? Or what are we trying to stop doing—alone and with others?

And Jesus seeks to teach a scribe, and us: to love freely, with all our heart (which is where the will is found), our soul, our mind, and our strength (which means resources). And we are to love our neighbor as we say we love God—and this is the sacrifice that is worthy to give God—this is the ancient law. Jesus says that the scribe is close to the kingdom—only close, not in it. To be in God's presence, in the relationship of the Trinity, we must endeavor to love one another as God has loved us. How near are we to the Kingdom?

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Palace: Improving economy lifts ...

From page A1

SWS said the new rating "is the best score obtained by the President since October 2004."

"It has been a long road for President Arroyo who has paid political capital from the tough decisions she made in the interest of the people," he said.

Good economy, good politics

Bunye said the "initial pains of fiscal discipline" had been transformed into "gains" for Juan de la Cruz.

Saying "good economics still make good politics," Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda explained that the improvement in Ms Arroyo's ratings was "not pure chance."

The former Albay lawmaker said economic gains were "decisively trickling down" with more jobs being created.

Double boon

Salceda pointed out that the jobs creation coincided with the slowdown in inflation to 2.6 percent in February, which he described as "a double boon to the economy."

The NSO said that about nine out of every 10 people in the country's 36.4-million labor force (92.2 percent) was employed, 50.5 percent of whom were absorbed by the services sector.

The agriculture and industry sectors employed 34.7 percent and 14.8 percent of the labor force, respectively.

New jobs

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri noted that the employment rate was 4.7 percent higher than the previous year, as the domestic economy created 1.52 million new jobs, much higher than the 754,000 net jobs created a year ago.

SOMETHING to smile about. Ms Arroyo exalts after attaining a level of trust in the presidency. EDWIN BACASMAS

The services sector alone contributed 1.45 million new jobs, up by 9.4 percent over a year ago.

The industry sector generated 103,000 new jobs in January 2007 compared to 87,000 job cuts last year.

However, the agriculture sector lost 38,000 in net employment as damage from severe typhoons last year lingered while the heavy rains in Mindanao and drier-than-usual weather in Central Luzon dampened prospects for bountiful harvests.

Age group 15-24

By gender, males had a higher unemployment rate at 8.1 percent compared to females at 7.4 percent. About 48.8 percent of the unemployed belonged to age group 15-24.

In terms of educational attainment, 36 percent of the unemployed had reached the college level while one in every three (32.9 percent) was a high school graduate.

Unpaid family workers

The number of unpaid family workers went down by 4.3 percent to 3.9 million, while the number of own-account workers slipped by 1.1 percent to 11.8 million.

In terms of hours worked, the number of full-time workers increased by 6.1 percent along with the rise in wage and salaried work. Part-time workers slightly inched up to 2.4 percent, or 285,000 people.

Data manipulated?

A labor federation said the NSO data was manipulated to present a rosy picture of the labor sector and prop up the administration senatorial ticket during the midterm elections.

Elmer Labog, national chair of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), said the NSO changed the unemployment definition in April 2005 by excluding people who are no longer actively seeking work for varied reasons, including bad weather, from the number of unemployed.

The new definition was first applied in July 2006, resulting in an 8-percent unemployment rate, which was actually 11.7 percent under the old definition.

"The concept employed by the NSO is actually skewed to present a progressive labor force environment rather than presenting the deteriorating situation of workers," the labor leader said.

One-hour work

Labog also questioned NSO's definition that an individual was considered employed as long as he or she worked for at least an hour during the one-week reference period.

"This definition defies real world situation and assumes a worker can survive on an hour's work for a whole week. It's insulting to the growing number of working poor in the Philippines," he said.

Labog also cited the inclusion of unpaid family labor to the number of employed as part of the distortion.

In the survey, the NSO said 11.5 percent of the total employed was unpaid family labor.

Labog also noted that 3,000 Filipinos were leaving the country every day to seek work.

Chief Justice warns poll fraud will split country

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A copy of the speech was provided by the court's public information office.

Puno said clean elections were necessary considering that the Philippines was plagued by fighting and intrigue.

Results crystal clear

"Now, more than ever, we need an election in which the means are transparent and the results are crystal clear. We live in a society where the tie that binds us is becoming more tenuous, where disunity seriously threatens our tranquility, where mistrust of one another's attitude governs just about every personal and impersonal relationship," he said.

The 2004 presidential election was marred by a cheating scandal in which the declared winner, President Macapagal-Arroyo, was accused of manipulating the results.

The allegations of cheating sparked the resignation of 10 Cabinet members and government officials, massive rallies and an impeachment complaint against the President. Up to now, Ms Arroyo's legitimacy remains in question.

Puno said it was not just the form of the election that was important, but also its effect.

"I stress quality election, not any kind of election. Elections need not just be free, orderly and honest. In an age when globalization is the mood and competition is the catch-cry, elections should be more than fair and free. More important, elections must bring out the best and the brightest of our people, for we cannot endure any reign of ignorance," he said.

Puno said elections should not be treated lightly because of the consequences.

Cerebral not celebrated

He advised voters against falling for the "smoke-and-mirrors tricks" practiced by politicians.

"The worst thing that can happen in a democracy is to have an election where the result is unpredictable, where the question of who will govern is left to caprice and, worse, when an election becomes no more than a game of chance, no more than a lottery of luck," he said.

Puno said people should be careful in choosing their leaders because the country's problems would not be solved by the popularity of politicians.

PUNO: Problems will not go away because of a song-and-dance number.

"The political, social and economic issues that our people will decide are many and mind-boggling. The people need to know how they who seek to serve them will approach these problems," he said.

"These problems need perceptive prescriptions, for they will not go away simply because of any song and dance number, however popular the performer may be. These troubles of tomorrow can be given meaningful solutions only by the cerebral and not by the celebrated; certainly, not by those who have not demonstrated any kind of civilizing influence," he added.

Bearers of light of truth

Puno said the media would play a role in helping the people use their heads when choosing their future leaders because media shapes the people's judgment.

He cited statistics from 1994 that more than 80 percent of Filipinos were exposed to different forms of mass media, adding that the figures today are probably higher.

"Again, it is the media that can provide the transparency to our coming electoral process. The media have more eyes that see better, more ears that hear better, more loquacious tongues that speak the truth more clearly. In fine, the media are the better bearers of the light of truth—the only light that can disperse the gathering darkness that threatens our electoral process," Puno said. *Leila B. Salaverria*

MILF denies link to illegal drugs

From page A1

hands of communist and Moro rebels in the Philippines.

During a break in his meetings with officials of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, Zufunkt of the US Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-West said there were indications that secret laboratories were producing the banned stimulant methamphetamine hydrochloride ("shabu") in areas controlled by communist and Moro rebels.

'Un-Islamic'

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu on Thursday denied his group was engaged in any activity related to illegal drugs.

"One, it is un-Islamic and, two, we remain faithful to a government truce that also calls on us to help track down criminals," Kabalu told Agence France Presse.

"The MILF totally denies this report. We are in fact trying to help contain this problem in local communities," he said. "We do not know what the motive is behind the claim but we are categorically saying we don't have anything to do with drugs. We cannot afford to engage in this activity."

Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police, said the PNP had recently uncovered a drug trafficking operation in Pasig City, which was run by a gang known to have originated from a rebel area in Mindanao.

"We are looking into the possible connections between this group and the secessionist groups," Pagdilao added.

He also told local radio that the communist New People's Army (NPA) operated marijuana plantations in the northern Cordillera highlands.

"What we are trying to confirm now is if manufacturers of shabu provide funds for the secessionists and other groups," Pagdilao said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the PDEA would investigate Zukunft's claims and come out with its own report as soon as possible.

Peace talks in peril

Reports of the MILF's involvement in illegal drugs followed heavy clashes near the Mindanao town of Midsayap where 17 MILF rebels and a soldier were killed last week. The MILF said the fighting erupted when government troops advanced into rebel-held areas in violation of an earlier agreement to pull back.

On Thursday, the MILF accused "hawkish" government officials of trying to sabotage the peace talks. MILF chair Ibrahim Murad said some officials were undermining efforts by President Macapagal-Arroyo to rein in military units operating in rebel areas.

The latest violence was another obstacle to resuming the peace talks, which have been stalled since late last year over demands by Murad's group for economic control of what they claim are ancestral lands.

The truce is being monitored by a small team of Malaysian, Libyan and Brunei monitors.

The MILF central committee wants "to keep combatants in place" in conflict zones because there are "spoilers of the peace process" among the government ranks, Murad said in a statement.

"On the part of MILF, war is not being stepped up. But the MILF will keep a short list of those intent on breaking the peace, including hawkish military officers and policymakers," Murad said.

Military actions' implications

He did not name those in the list or say what the MILF intended to do about them.

Earlier this week, Ms Arroyo reminded military field commanders to be "constantly aware of the strategic implications of tactical actions in the proximity of MILF areas."

She ordered the defense department to devise a plan that ensured all levels of the military understood the peace negotiations.

But Murad on Thursday said a "prolonged cessation of hostilities" could only be achieved when troops are stripped of their powers to patrol civilian Muslim communities.

Troops often "disregard the preventive measures" to avoid violence, leading to fighting, Murad said.

"I have no doubt about keeping up the struggle to mobilize the population through a principled level of negotiation," he said. "Peace will reign when the military solution is contained and ... violations are not repeated." *Reports from AFP and Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Roco charisma working for Sonia

From page A1

college graduate in every Filipino family.

"It's really our conscious and deliberate attempt to make people aware that I will continue Raul Roco's mission of making quality education accessible to all," the widow, a school teacher for 25 years, said yesterday when asked to explain her rise in the surveys.

"I'm sure it's not because of money. I cannot afford the expensive ads other candidates are repeatedly showing on TV," she said.

In the Pulse Asia survey conducted from Feb. 28 to March 5, Roco jumped to within striking distance of the winning circle, placing between the 12th and 18th places. In a survey conducted by the same pollster on Jan. 25-29, she had only placed between 27th and 44th.

GO is, of course, delighted.

"It shows us there's nothing like genuine hard work to get going in the election campaign," said GO spokesperson Adel Tamano.

"Nobody gave her a chance when the campaign started. We did, and now it's showing that we made a good decision," Tamano said.

Turncoat issue

Roco said the survey results also showed "the effect of the turncoat issue on some candidates after the 'ASO Jingle' came out."

She was referring to the derisive campaign jingle prepared by a group of supporters of the late opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. and purportedly directed at three Team Unity candidates—Edgardo Angara, Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta—who had served as Poe's campaign leaders in 2004.

"This is indicative that voters are now a little bit more educated. They have had it [with traditional politicians who switch party allegiances to suit their interests]," Roco said.

Sotto has lost 3.4 percentage points, dropping from 28.8 percent in the January survey to 25.4 percent in the latest poll. He is now between 11th and 17th places.

Only Angara is in a safe position in the top five. Oreta is not even within spitting distance.

Roco said she planned to make the most of the remaining days before the local campaigns kick off on March 29.

She said she would take her campaign message to the Bicol region (where her husband was a revered son) and to Bohol province (where her own family has its roots).

She also said she would go deeper into the issues confronting every locality that she visits.

"After March 29, we start proclaiming the local candidates. And when the local campaigns start moving, the senatorial candidates will be relegated to the background," she said.

Continuing charisma

While campaigning in Western Visayas last week, Roco expressed the hope that her late husband's still palpable charisma would help her win a seat in the Senate.

"It's been almost two years since he passed on and yet people still express their condolences," she said.

"Also, there are people who apologize for having shaken him during the campaign [in 2004 when he last ran for President]. They say they must've shaken him so hard that they contributed to his illness," she added, chuckling.

Roco has two 30-second TV ads showing her with her late husband in footage taken from his own campaign ads that relayed the same message—education as a means for all Filipinos to achieve a better life.

One ad has her wearing Raul Roco's signature floral shirts.

The other ends with the couple saying the same line in Filipino: "There's still hope for a new Philippines."

According to Roco, the concept was similar to that employed in the video featuring the American crooner Nat "King" Cole, who died when his daughter Natalie, also a singer, was still a little girl.

"They had a video wherein they sang together with Natalie all grown up," she said in reference to the father-and-daughter "Unforgettable" duet.

Late nights

But by Roco's own admission, she can only afford to buy late-night, and not prime-time, spots.

"I just hope people get to see those ads because they cost so much," she said, adding with a laugh:

"There was a time I was watching [the GMA 7 late-night newscast] 'Saksi,' waiting for my ad to come on. I must have dozed off because when I noticed that it was getting quite late, I checked with one of my staff [and] was told that it had already been aired. I missed it!"

Roco said that apart from her husband's continuing influence among the youth, she was also getting substantial help from his friends in politics, particularly the Aksyon Demokratiko candidates in 2004.

"I'm getting help in the campaign, of course, from the likes of Bong Coo and Jay Sonza. Hermie Aquino will be running in Tarlac; he's also helping out, [as is] Batas Mauricio," she said.

Mauricio, Coo and Sonza were on Aksyon's senatorial slate. Aquino was Raul Roco's running mate.

"I've yet to hear from Frank Chavez," Roco said jokingly of the former solicitor general, who was also part of the Aksyon slate.

12M votes

Despite her admitted meager resources, Roco is targeting 12 million votes nationwide and is one of the more diligent campaigners in the GO ticket.

"That was the figure [Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago] got when she placed seventh [in the senatorial race]. I guess that's already a safe place for a candidate in the tally," Roco said.

This may also be why Roco wants to make the most out of every GO sortie.

When the coalition's sorties in Antique were canceled early this month, she still proceeded to the province from Iloilo, where the candidates had billeted themselves for the Western Visayas campaign.

She seemed peeved when told that the Antique leg had been canceled. "Cancellations make us look disorganized," she said.

Roco, one of the leaders of the Student Catholic Action and the National Union of Students of the Philippines in the 1960s, said she still had to get the hang of campaigning despite being part of her husband's many political forays.

"I can't say I'm already at cruising speed. Compared to the [Panfilo] Lacsons and the [Loren] Legardas, I'm far from cruising along at this point," she said in an interview early this month.

Recalling motorcades under the blazing sun, waiting for her turn to speak before a crowd, and rallies that did not materialize, Roco said: "So this is how it feels to be a candidate. I didn't realize it would be this difficult.

"But it's rewarding when you see the people coming up to you and being received with warmth."

Asked if she thought she had what it took to endure the rigors of the campaign, she replied with a smile and what looked like a wink: "What do you think?"

Biofuels for cars not yet catching on, GMA laments

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAgal-Arroyo yesterday admitted that the public has not come around to the use of biofuels on their cars, despite official assurances they were safe alternatives to imported diesel and gasoline.

The President said despite the enactment of Republic Act 2006, the landmark law mandating the blending of biodiesel from coconut and bioethanol from sugarcane into imported fuels, car owners have yet to be convinced that the mixture is safe to use.

The Biofuels Act, signed into law last Jan. 17, mandates the mixing of 1 percent of biodiesel in diesel and 5 percent ethanol in gasoline for the first four years of the law's implementation. The mix will be increased to 2 percent for biodiesel and 10 percent for ethanol.

The law makes the use of the biofuels mandatory on some 5.2 million registered vehicles in the country.

"We still need to obtain public acceptance of a 10 percent bioethanol blend in 2010 and ensure adequate source of biofuels as mandated by the Biofuels Act. And getting public acceptance for this is more daunting a challenge than we can imagine," Ms Arroyo said in a speech before the Philippine Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

"There are those who say for instance that ethanol will make my car go slower. Or there are those who say, why are we pushing so much for ethanol and biofuels when we are going to end up with less food on our table?" she said, referring to concerns the development of biodiesel and ethanol could affect the supply and prices of sugar and coconut products.

"I have heard those kinds of arguments and that's why it sort of slowed down the (implementation of the) Biofuels Act," Ms Arroyo said.

'Desperate housewives' fight back

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THEY ARE ANGRY, NOT FRIGHTened. And they intend to fight back.

Carolina "Bobbie" Malay, Fides Lim Ladlad, Linda Lacaba Echanis and Lualhati Baylosis yesterday came out together to warn the government that they would bring the issue of "political persecution" to the world should violence befall their husbands—Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, Vicente Ladlad, Randy Echanis and Rafael Baylosis, respectively.

"We thought that after martial law, everything will be okay, that we had achieved democratic space to help promote peace in our nation," Malay said at a press conference in Quezon City.

"We are angry because [the government has messed up] our families," she said, adding that because of the continuous hunt for their husbands by "professional witch-hunters," their chances of being with their children and grandchildren had ranged from rare to none.

Being political activists themselves, all four women are no strangers to the plight of their husbands, who are all targets of a manhunt on charges they were behind the killing of New People's Army members suspected of being government spies in Leyte in 1985.

Reading from a prepared statement, Malay spoke in behalf of the three others: "We, the wives of four perennial targets of attack by professional witch-hunters, condemn the issuance of arrest warrants for false murder charges against our husbands even as we seek every legal redress to correct this glaring abuse of power."

Whereabouts unknown

Malay said they did not know where their husbands were. She said the last time she was in touch with Representative Ocampo was after the police raid on their Quezon City home last weekend, with him saying that "he was proud of me."

Echanis said she last heard from her husband, the deputy secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, last year, before President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a state of national emergency.

Said Ladlad, who wrote UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston on Monday about her husband's case: "I don't know where he is. I am making the rounds of government offices. I am appealing to [the government] not to cause his forced disappearance."

'Stupid'

She also called on the President to order the military to strictly abide by legal procedures and ensure that the rights of her husband and his co-accused were upheld in case of their arrest.

The women took turns offering proof of their husbands' innocence, mostly old newspaper photos and clippings showing the men detained in different prisons during the time of the so-called communist purge.

"The soldiers are stupid. How can our husbands commit the murders if they were serving time in prison at that time?" Echanis said, accusing the Arroyo administration of twisting history.

More than anything else, the women said it would not be advisable for their husbands to come out without exhaustive legal preparation to face the charges in court.

"We don't want them dead ... They have to think very carefully and very well. We are behind them every step of the way," Malay said.

She said, however, that Ocampo's lawyer only received on Wednesday the certified true copy of the Leyte court's decision ordering his and the others' arrest.

From this, she said, she sensed "foot dragging" in the justice system.

Ladlad pointed out that the threat to their husbands' lives would be greater if they were to face the charges in Leyte.

"They will not be safe there. How many have been victimized by political killings there?" she said.

US raps GMA on killings of leftists

From page A1

mediately, I am not optimistic in the short run," said Eugene Martin, a former deputy head of the US Embassy in Manila, and now with the US Institute of Peace, an independent group established and funded by the US Congress.

Martin said that US counterterrorism cooperation and training opportunities the Philippine military provided American forces "may limit pressure on the Arroyo administration" to take action on the killings.

He said donor nations and international financial institutions, which already had strong anticorruption requirements for economic assistance, should link aid to independent investigations of the killings to enhance the resolution of the cases.

No contradiction

Jonathan Farrar, the principal US assistant secretary of state for human rights, said "there is no tension and no contradiction" between improving the protection of human rights in the Philippines and assisting Manila to combat terrorist threats.

According to state department figures, US aid to help the Philippines fight insurgencies included $70 million in Foreign Military Financing between 2004-06 and $2.7 million in International Military Education and Training in 2004. It also received $148 million worth of equipment under the Excess Defense Articles program.

'Unexplained killings'

In Manila, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Arroyo administration was doing its best to stop the killings but needed the cooperation of the public in its effort.

"Let me state that the Philippine government really condemns these unexplained killings and it is prepared to do whatever is necessary so that we finally put a stop to all of these atrocities," Bunye said.

He said the government had made progress and had taken concrete steps to address the killings, citing the creation of special courts to handle the cases, the assignment of additional investigators and the strengthening of its witness protection program.

'Guilt complex?'

On Wednesday night, a security team led by Philippine National Police Deputy Director General Avelino Razon left for Washington in case the US panel agreed to the Philippine Embassy's request that it be allowed to provide official representatives to its hearing.

Reelectionist Sen. Joker Arroyo of the administration's Team Unity, who had criticized the hearings as interference in Philippine affairs, said the Razon mission was a "junket."

"Do they have a guilt complex?" said Arroyo. "If Malacañang thinks its position is correct, then why should they explain?"

The Arroyo administration has denied allegations by a UN human rights expert and its own fact-finding commission that the military was behind most of the killings of activists since 2001. Her office insists the government is determined to uphold the rule of law.

Military officials have accused activists of links to communist rebels, who have been waging a 38-year-old rural-based insurgency.

Washington has underlined its concerns to the Arroyo administration over the killings and "strongly urged Philippine officials to take additional steps," such as those recommended by Manila's own commission of inquiry on the violence, John said.

'Not a single conviction'

The commission, headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo, found circumstantial evidence to link some sectors of the military to the deaths.

"It is disturbing to note that even though hundreds have been killed so far, to date there has not been a single conviction," T. Kumar, rights group Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific advocacy director, told the hearing.

He said that Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who was implicated in the killings in the Melo report, was lauded by Ms Arroyo as "an asset to the counterinsurgency" following his retirement last September and had been encouraged to run for a seat in the Philippine Congress.

Churches slam abuses

Also yesterday, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines in a news conference issued the 90-page "Let the Stones Cry Out": An Ecumenical Report on Human Rights in the Philippines and a Call to Action.

The report indicts the Arroyo administration for alleged crimes against humanity for the murders of hundreds of leftist activists, journalists and church workers. It was released to coincide with the start of the US hearings on extrajudicial killings in the Philippines.

The NCCP, a network of protestant churches, joined a high-powered delegation of human rights and religious activists to the Washington hearings.

RP delegation

The delegation included Ms Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes, NCCP general secretary; Bishop Eliezer M. Pascua, general secretary of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines; Bishop Solito Toquero, resident bishop of the United Methodist Church-Manila; Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez of Kalookan; Fr. Jose P. Dizon, executive director of the Workers Assistance Center Inc.; Marie Hilao-Enriquez, secretary general of Karapatan; Edre Olalia of the Counsels for the Defense of Liberties; Athea Peñalosa, information and publicity coordinator of the Children's Rehabilitation Center; Amirah Ali Lidasan, secretary general and cofounder of the Moro-Christian People's Alliance. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Cynthia D. Balana, TJ Burgonio, Christian V. Esguerra, AP, AFP, Reuters*

IN THE KNOW
Christian activists

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF Churches in the Philippines represents around 13 million people belonging mainly to Protestant churches. It is comprised of 10 member churches and 10 service-oriented organizations.

It counts as members the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the United Methodist Church, Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities, and the Philippine Bible Society.

NCCP has made public its opinions on different issues through the years. It called for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2005, after she admitted talking on the phone to an election official during the 2004 presidential polls.

In a statement, NCCP said, "A country can only be strong if it is led by one who enjoys the trust, respect and support of the broad masses of the people."

The council also asked the President and the European Court of Justice in 2003 to remove the terrorist tag on Jose Ma. Sison, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. It said that only by removing the tag could the peace talks proceed.

Last year, NCCP voiced its opposition to the proposal to change the country's Constitution. It said the move lacked "moral justification." NCCP said: "Done at a time when the grim specter of a more authoritarian rule seems to loom in the horizon, we cannot allow Charter change to see fruition." ***Cyril L. Bonabente, INQUIRER Research***

Fugitive lawmaker 'testifies' in style—through YouTube

From page A1

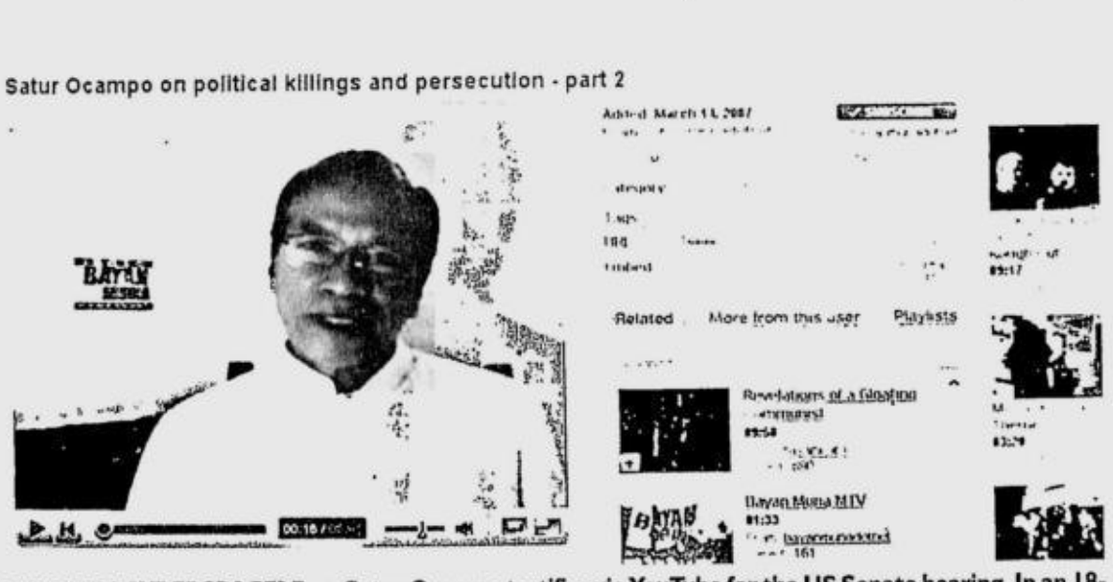
"I call on our friends in different countries who have expressed their alarm over the extrajudicial killings to exert more pressure, possibly present more fact-finding missions, [because] the killings are continuing," Ocampo said in a second video that ran for six minutes and 41 seconds.

He urged sympathizers to "put pressure, through your government, on the Philippine government to make the final decisive action" to end the killings.

The videos were taken between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday somewhere in Metro Manila "using an N80 mobile phone lent to Bayan Muna by an administration ally," said Tonyo Cruz, media officer of the party-list group.

The background was bare, showing only a campaign sticker of the party-list group.

A statement released by Bayan Muna said the posting of Ocampo's videos was in fulfillment of his promise to participate in the US congressional inquiry. But Cruz said it was not certain if the video was played during the hearings in Washington.



A FIRST IN CYBERSPACE? Rep. Satur Ocampo testifies via YouTube for the US Senate hearing. In an 18-minute broadcast, he said that government efforts to put him in jail and disqualify his party "cannot be treated in isolation from the general trend of political repression and the state of extrajudicial killings."

Not in isolation

In his video message, Ocampo said the government was trying to "throw me in prison" and to disqualify Bayan Muna and other party-list groups, Anakpawis and Gabriela, from the May elections.

"[These efforts] cannot be treated in isolation from the general trend of political repression and the state of extrajudicial killings," he said.

He described as "a big hoax" the administration's condemnation of the political killings, saying:

"The security forces have been given a go-signal to go on with their chosen means of achieving their objectives by targeting both the armed revolutionary forces and the unarmed activists of progressive political parties and people's organizations."

Early this week, Ocampo promised to take part in the US hearing despite making himself "inaccessible" because of a pending arrest warrant.

He is among those implicated in the deaths of supposed communist rebels "purged" by their comrades 22 years ago.

Also targets of arrest are Jose Ma. Sison, founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines; National Democratic Front leader Luis Jalandoni, and 50 other people. *(See story at top of this page.)*

Both Ocampo and Sison have denied the charges, saying that they were both under military detention at the time of the killings.

Antiterror law

Ocampo warned that the enactment of the antiterror law, the Human Security Act of 2007, would pave the way for the declaration of the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, as "terrorist organizations."

He said he feared the move would lead to further repression of the groups accused of fronting for the armed movement.

The new law may also eliminate the concept of rebellion as distinct from ordinary crimes because "it's often motivated by patriotic and noble intentions," he said.

Comments

"The administration wants to overturn the long-established judicial doctrine that rebellion must be treated with caution ... [because] when it succeeds, it means political and social changes," said Ocampo, who is also facing rebellion charges along with five other party-list representatives.

As of 4:30 p.m. yesterday, Ocampo's YouTube message had been viewed 203 times and earned at least seven comments.

One viewer said: "This is a very strong and positive video. Satur Ocampo has dedicated his life to fighting for the Filipino people. President Arroyo has dedicated hers to carrying out US dictates and unleashing death squads on her own people. This is why there's a popular mass movement in the Philippines dedicated to bringing down the Arroyo [administration]. Truly, this illegitimate and repressive regime is reaping what it has sown."

Said another: "Honorable Satur Ocampo, I'm one of the millions of Filipinos supporting your cause."

But not all comments were positive.

"We don't need [you]. Go away! Leave the Philippines in peace. You and your kind have long been pestering this beautiful land with your ugly slogans and godless ideology!" said a viewer nicknamed "mejai103."

'Just campaigning'

Another viewer said: "What have you guys got to show for your group? Have you helped feed hungry Filipinos? Have you improved the lives of street children? We can do a lot for our country. Let us start by helping our neighbors and paying our taxes honestly. Words and ideology won't calm an empty stomach."

According to the Philippine National Police, Ocampo's YouTube videos were merely his way of campaigning for the May elections.

"He is just campaigning for his party. We are requesting him to come out and submit himself to the authorities and to the court to really present his side," the PNP spokesperson, Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, told reporters yesterday in Camp Crame, after viewing the videos.

Pagdilao said that if Ocampo had "something to say about the cases, he should do it in the proper forum."

"He has nothing to fear. The Supreme Court has shown it can be fair," Pagdilao said.

'Run, but you can't hide'

The PNP is still hunting Ocampo, Pagdilao said.

Addressing his quarry, he said: "We just have to be patient. Our operatives are working hard because we are on the side of the law and justice. Again, you may run, but you cannot really hide."

Pagdilao said Ocampo was probably being aided by "underground groups."

"I do believe he is being helped. If no one is helping him, how is it that he can hide? We all know he is a member of a group with links to the underground CPP-NPA," Pagdilao said.

The PNP spokesperson also said that while the police had yet to find evidence that any "aboveground" organization, or the political opposition, was aiding Ocampo, they would not hesitate to file charges against the group. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

Now, leftists welcome American 'imperialists' meddling

From page A1

"be said that serious moves are being taken to abate the violation of human and labor rights," PM Rep. Renato Magtubo said in a statement.

Magtubo said that the "spotlight of criticism" from the United States and other countries would put pressure on Malacañang to match its words with results.

"We are happy that the truth about the killings came out despite the last-minute damage control by the Arroyo government," he added.

Anakpawis nominee Willy Marbella, internal deputy secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, limited his praise to the US legislative branch, saying the executive branch under President George Bush could be indirectly blamed for the killings.

'Make Bush accountable'

Marbella said it was high time the US public "knows what is happening in the Philippines and what type of government the Bush administration is fully supporting and considers a major ally."

"The blood of Filipino martyrs is not only on the hands of Gloria but on Bush as well because of his military aid to the Armed Forces of the Philippines," Marbella said.

Marbella said he was glad that progressive US lawmakers were using the issue of the killings "to further make Bush accountable for the atrocities that he and his allies committed in the name of his war of terror."

Rep. Liza Maza of Gabriela urged Americans "to pressure their government to cease its military aid that only draws blood from the Filipino people."

"Ensuring that human rights is upheld is ultimately in the hands of the people, who will not tolerate its violation and will rise up in dissent to protect the dignity of human lives," she said.

Magtubo called on the US Congress to urge financial institutions and international agencies to refrain from extending assistance to the Philippines until the Arroyo government acts seriously on the political killings.

"As for suspending US military assistance to the Philippines, we would rather that such type of aid be scrapped altogether," he added.

Nikki opposes SK abolition

FORMER SEN. NIKKI Coseteng has declared support for the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) as a training ground for future leaders of the country.

Coseteng, who is making a comeback as a senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition said she was opposed the abolition of the SK.

"The youth are more idealistic and patriotic than many of us adults. These virtues must be nurtured so that when they grow up and take their turn in running this country we can be assured of competent leaders who will place national interest above self gain," she said, in a press statement.

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SC lifts Pasig judge's TRO on passports

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS paved the way for the implementation of the government's passport modernization program after it temporarily blocked a restraining order issued by a Pasig Regional Trial Court against the project.

The high tribunal also stopped Pasig RTC Judge Franco Falcon from proceeding with the case filed by BCA International Corp. against the Department of Foreign Affairs until further notice.

BCA had earlier asked the Pasig court to stop the DFA from awarding the contract for the e-passport to another firm, and the RTC issued an injunction on Feb. 23.

"You, your agents, representatives or persons acting upon your orders or in your place, are hereby enjoined from executing and implementing the order... and writ of preliminary injunction ... issued by Judge Franco T. Falcon in Civil Case No. 71079, and from conducting further proceedings in said case until further orders from this Court," the tribunal said in its March 12 temporary restraining order blocking Falcon's injunction. The TRO was addressed to Falcon and BCA.

In a resolution released the same day, the high court also directed Falcon and BCA to file a comment within 10 days of receiving the directive.

The DFA and BCA entered into a build-operate-transfer agreement for the passport modernization project in 2000 after the National Economic Development Authority approved the Machine Readable Passport and Visa Project.

The DFA later terminated the agreement with BCA, citing delays in the project's implementation and the financial incapability of BCA and the Philippine Passport Corp. (Philpass) to finish the project in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

BCA had incorporated Philpass to undertake and implement the passport project.

BCA contested the DFA's decision and sought to have the matter arbitrated before the Philippine Dispute Resolution Center Inc., but the DFA did not agree.

The Department of Justice then issued an opinion upholding the legality of the DFA's termination of the deal, and the DFA signed a memorandum of agreement with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to solicit bids for the passport modernization project.

The BSP is in charge of providing international standard-compliant passports in place of the current handwritten and manually processed passports used by Filipinos.

BCA brought the matter up to the Pasig RTC, which issued a preliminary injunction stopping the DFA and the BSP from awarding a new contract for the project.

The Pasig court's injunction had prompted Sen. Mar Roxas to warn of a passport shortage if it was not lifted.

Roxas had said the shortage could prevent Filipinos from traveling abroad, which was their right.

DFA officials had also warned the passport supply would last only until June and might not be replenished quickly enough because the production of new passports could take at least seven months.

Go easy on ultrasound, expectant moms warned

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT MIGHT BE FUN, EVEN ENTERtaining, but getting an ultrasound just to find out the sex of your baby or what he or she looks like in your womb without the advice of a competent physician could be risky, doctors warned yesterday.

"The use of ultrasound for entertainment should be discouraged," Dr. Corazon Yabes Almirante of the Philippine Children's Medical Center told the INQUIRER yesterday.

"The request for an ultrasound should come from a doctor not from the patient," she said.

She expressed concern over the growing number of pregnant women undergoing an ultrasound out of curiosity.

"We have to educate the public that it should be a doctor who will ask for an ultrasound," she said.

The technology is safe, she said, but it could pose risks if done several times and without indications from a doctor.

Harvard Medical School professor Benjamin Sachs said getting an ultrasound for other than medical reasons could give parents-to-be false hopes or unnecessary worry.

If a mother, for instance, gets an ultrasound on her own and sees that her baby looks fine, she could be missing some details that might indicate otherwise.

If the doctor who conducted the ultrasound is not trained to detect specific abnormalities, the mother will come away with the false impression that her baby is fine. She would not get the proper medical attention for her baby, Sachs said.

The other side of the coin is an untrained doctor telling a mother her baby has an abnormality, when in fact the baby is all right. This would cause the mother unnecessary worry and she could end up undergoing medical procedures she did not need, he said.

Almirante said an ultrasound should be in aid of diagnosis and not just to satisfy one's curiosity.

She is the founding president of the Philippine chapter of Fetus as a Patient International Society, which is holding its three-day international congress at the Edsa Shangri-La hotel in Pasig City this week.

Sachs is one of the speakers at the congress, which will discuss high-risk pregnancies and the detection of illnesses in fetuses, among other topics.

Society founding president Asim Kurjak, who also teaches at the University of Zagreb Medical School in Croatia, will present the new field of fetal neurology.

Kurjak said the field focuses on the study of the fetus' brain in order to detect abnormalities or illnesses like cerebral palsy early on.

Using 3-D and 4-D ultrasound, a doctor can observe how the fetus moves and establish a pattern of behavior, Society president Frank Chervenak of New York Presbyterian Hospital said.

Bongbong welcomes Tessie in Marcos turf

LAOAG CITY—ILOCOS NORTE Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. welcomed yesterday administration senatorial candidate Tessie Aquino-Oreta and two of her partymates during their campaign sortie in Batac town, the hometown of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Marcos also welcomed Vicente "Tito" Sotto and Zambales Gov. Vicente Magsaysay during a program that Batac Mayor Jesus Nalupta Sr. prepared for them.

The three were the first administration senatorial candidates to court the Ilocano votes after the lineup was formally declared.

Marcos briefly talked with the candidates before leading them to the Marcos mausoleum where the remains of the late strongman are kept.

He declined to openly endorse the three.

His mother, former First Lady Imelda Marcos, however, was said to have endorsed Oreta.

"I heard that Mrs. Marcos has already endorsed me and I am very thankful. That is encouraging. It is part of political maturity that political forces that were in opposite directions are now in unity for a shared concern for the Filipinos," Oreta said.

ORETA

MARCOS

"This is a good move for the country and we should welcome this," she added.

Marcos earlier said he would endorse senatorial candidates from both the administration and the opposition based on personality and not because of party decision.

Asked how she felt when she visited the strongman's remains, Oreta said: "I am glad I went because I have been reading about it. I thought he looked younger and he had lots of hair (seeing him inside the coffin)."

She said she would leave to the government to decide whether it would allow the remains of Marcos to be interred at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

"It is not for me to decide and I don't think my comment will matter. I would like the government to settle that," she said. *With a report from Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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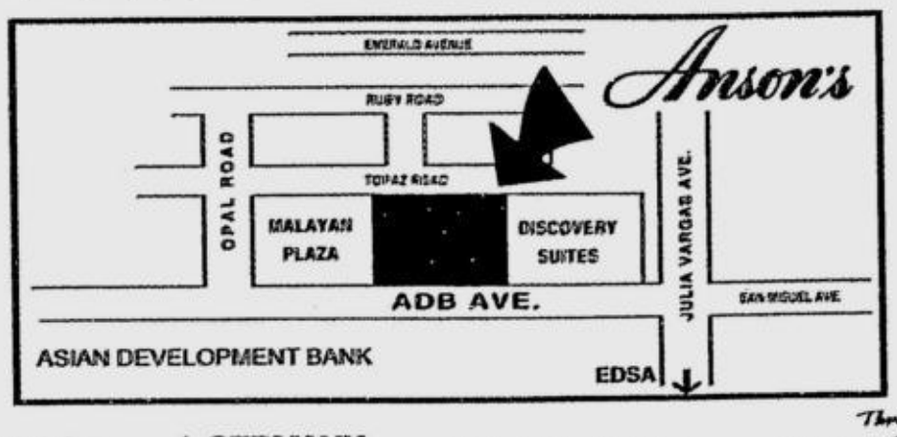

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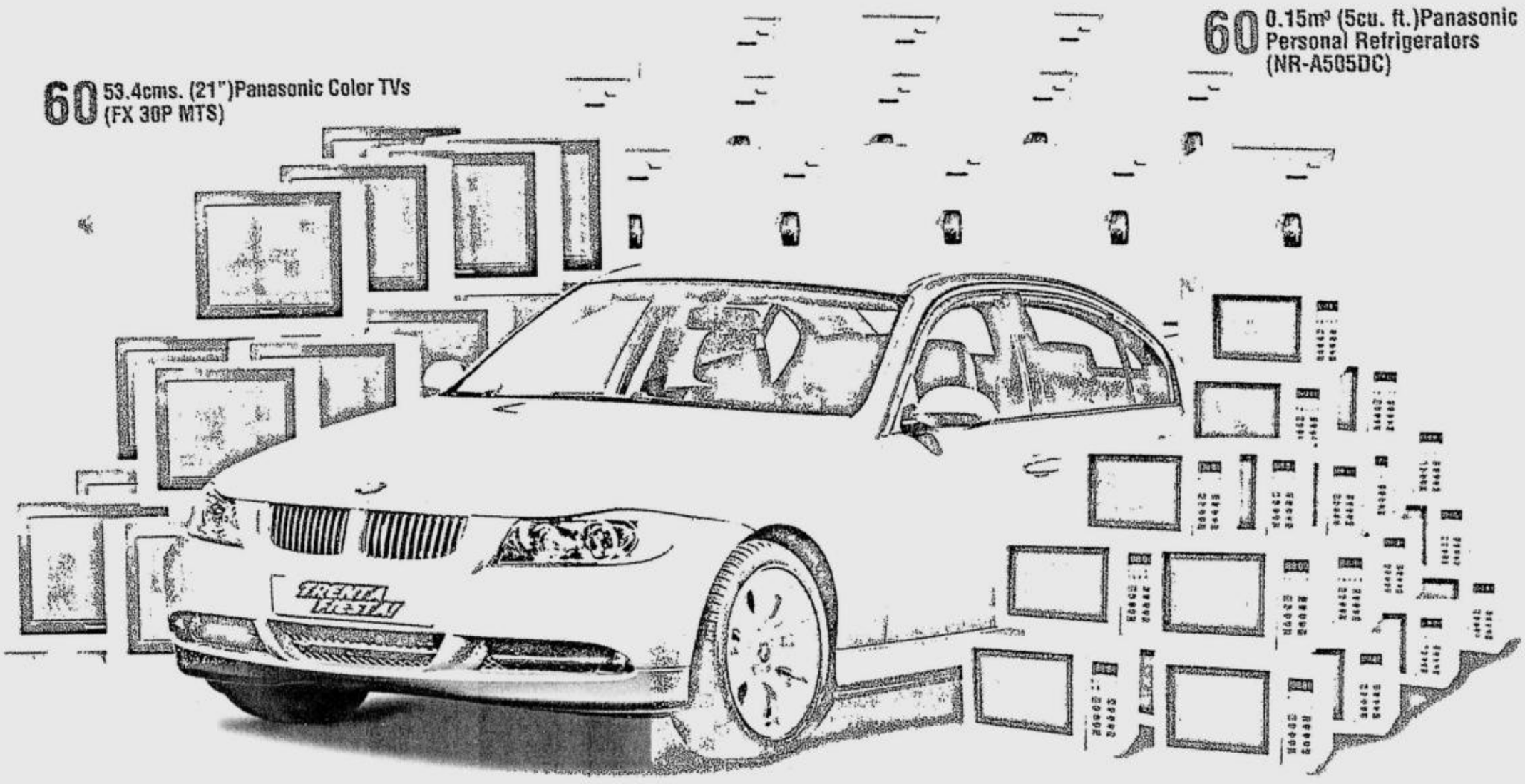

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Bad karma

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION'S INITIAL REACtion to the latest corruption survey conducted among foreign businessmen in Asia by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, which found that the Philippines is now perceived as the most corrupt in the region, was classic denial.

President Macapagal-Arroyo dismissed the findings as inaccurate because, as she explained, "The political analysts, they work on old data. They don't work on up-to-date data." (The survey was conducted last January and February.)

EDITORIAL

Yesterday, the administration started showing signs of recovery. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye belatedly acknowledged the "culture of corruption that has crept into several areas of Philippine society and politics over many decades" and noted that "this government has undertaken a strong and steady effort to curb graft through criminal justice, administrative controls and procedural reforms."

Even a columnist as administration-friendly as Alex Magno refused to play the spin game. "It's bad news from any angle, and whichever frantic way the item is spun .... Government spokesmen have tried to mitigate the adverse resonance of that report by saying that this study is based entirely on perceptions of people who do business in the region. But of course."

To be sure, the limits of the latest PERC survey must be acknowledged. First, it includes only 13 countries in Asia. Second, a country's rating is based on the perceptions of foreign businessmen doing business in that country; in the case of the Philippines, "more than 100" expatriate businessmen were polled. Third, PERC itself noted that there was no worsening of corruption in the Philippines: "It is bad and has been bad all along. People are just growing tired of the inaction and insincerity of leading officials when they promise to fight corruption."

Given these limits, however, there is no disputing the PERC survey's conclusion: The Philippines was the country with "the distinction of being perceived in the worst light this year."

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 as the worst possible score, the Philippines received a grade of 9.40. This was a dramatic drop from last year's grade of 7.80.

What explains the deterioration? Noting that corruption in the private sector in the Philippines was only at 4.15 ("which is quite good"), PERC suggested that the decline could be traced to the plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada, which has dragged on for years, and to the "opposition's charges" against President Arroyo.

But we note that the businessmen-respondents in each country were also asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their host-country's judiciary and the legal system in the war on corruption. It is for this reason that we see the 2007 PERC corruption survey as an indictment of the administration of justice in the Arroyo era.

In the last two years, the President and her allies have repeatedly mugged Lady Justice; now some of the witnesses are talking out loud about the thuggery they have seen.

The fall from a mediocre grade of 7.80 to a dismal grade of 9.40 must have been caused in part by the abysmal performance of Raul Gonzalez as justice secretary. Gonzalez will be remembered as one of the worst administrators of justice in our history; his injudicious remarks, his appalling partisanship even in legal matters, his well-proven inability to be **just**, not only leave a sorry legacy for his children; they undermine public confidence in the rule of law.

The fall must also have been caused in part by a pliable Ombudsman, Merceditas Gutierrez, who insulted the Supreme Court and the noble profession of the law by, first, dilly-dallying on the anomalous Mega Pacific contract approved by the Commission on Elections; then rushing to beat the high court's deadline by submitting a partial resolution that found one commissioner partially guilty; then finally conducting hearings of her own (after the deadline had passed); and finally issuing a resolution (based on old evidence already found wanting) that found everyone innocent. The perfect crime.

In the Arroyo era, justice has been delayed, selective, punitive for oppositionists, generous for the truly big fish. No wonder businessmen see corruption as a booming business.

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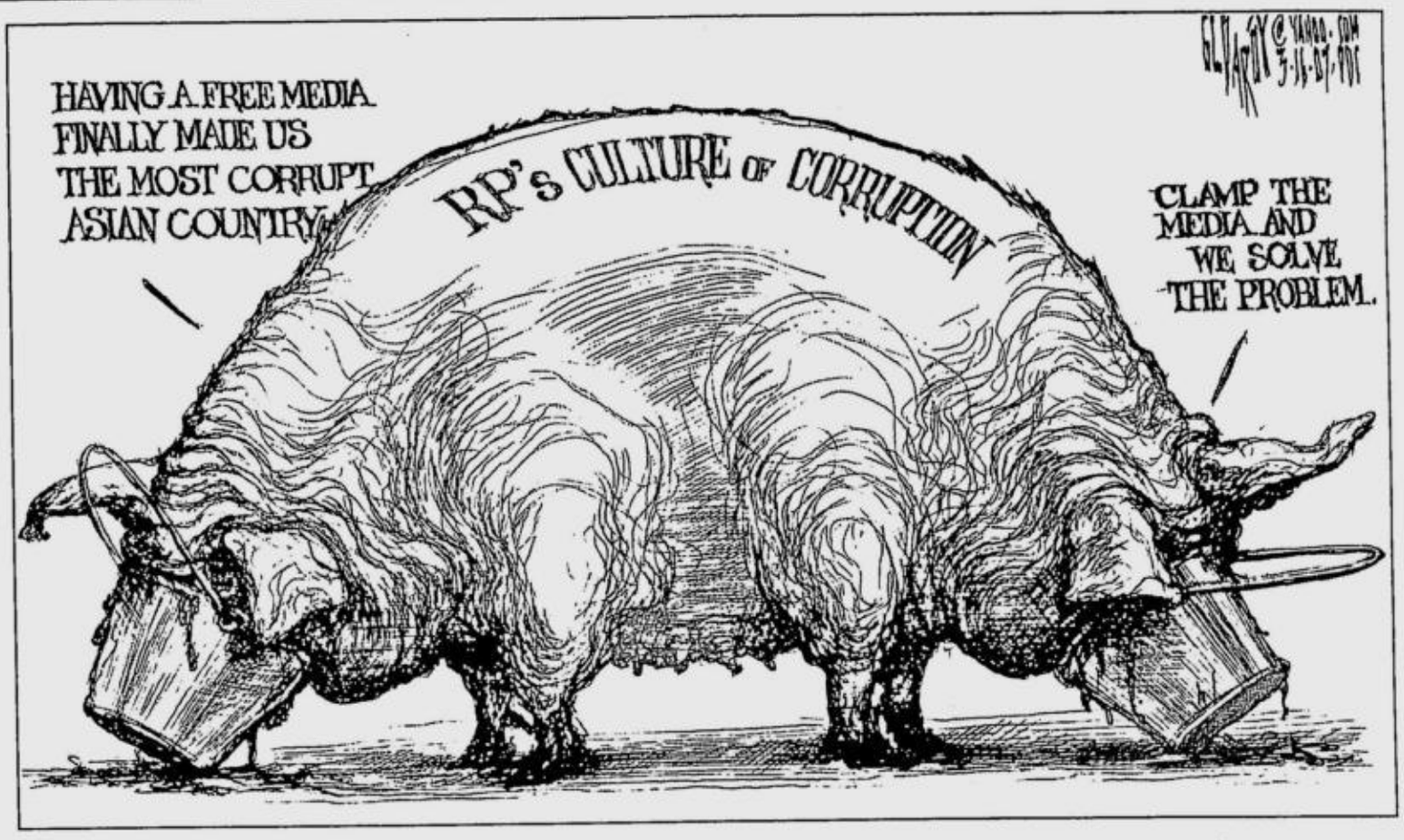


Denial will not make corruption vanish

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS IN TOtal denial of the survey, conducted by an international body, showing the Philippines as the most corrupt in Asia. That's not true, she said in effect. That perception is the work of the opposition that is always criticizing her and working for her downfall, she continued; with help from the media which are always publicizing negative reports about her administration, she added.

It is amusing that in the same issue of the INQUIRER that reported her denial, there is another story on the streetlights bought in connection with the 12th Asean Summit in Cebu. According to the story, the streetlights, which cost only P12,000 each, were purchased at P300,000 apiece. From P12,000 to P300,000! What an overprice! The deal was contracted and paid for in Manila, not in Cebu, so you have an idea who was responsible for the overprice.

The same INQUIRER issue also reported that the Philippine Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) has 14 or 16 graft cases, which it has finished investigating and in which it has recommended the dismissal of top administration officials, but they are "frozen" in the office of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Right there you have an explanation why corruption is endemic in the Philippines. Top officials like the President refuse to acknowledge that corruption is already very bad, and lower-ranking officials sit on cases against administration officials. While the administration is quick to suspend and dismiss officials (like mayors and governors) from the opposition, it protects its own people even though they have already been found guilty of corruption. While the administration is quick to punish lower-ranking officials and employees who embezzle only a few thousand pesos, it is slow in prosecuting high-ranking officials, like Joc-Joc Bolante, who run away with hundreds of millions of pesos in taxpayers' money.

No amount of denial will make government corruption vanish. The President can shout until she is blue in the face that there is no corruption in her administration, but the people know better. A citizen cannot get any permit or license from any government agency unless he slips a few pesos to the clerk. Many desks in government offices have a drawer perpetually open to receive peso bills from citizens transacting business with the government. In any government office there are hordes of fixers who can make your transaction a little faster in exchange for a fee. These fixers share the fee with government employees to make the papers move faster.

In fact, no paper will move at all in a government office unless some hands are greased with peso bills.

But the President says there is no corruption in her administration. The impression of corruption is the work of the opposition abetted by the media, she says. Tell that to the Marines.

* * *

I got a quick reaction from Dodie King, public relations and advertising director of Pagcor, on an item here last Wednesday about a bar and restaurant at the Airport Casino Filipino being arbitrarily closed by Pagcor. Not true, said King. Here's his letter:

"It is not true that the Via Bellagio Restaurant was 'arbitrarily closed' since our contract with them expired in November 2005. Pagcor management did not renew their contract because we needed the space for the expansion of our operations.

"However, on the basis of an internal memo, the operators of Via Bellagio were able to obtain a temporary restraining order. Hence the restaurant had been operating without a contract for more than a year.

"After several negotiations between both parties, our final offer was to extend their stay for another six months to give them sufficient time to vacate the premises. However, they refused this offer.

"Rest assured that this is a purely business decision. There is no politics involved."

Dodie King
PR & Advertising, Pagcor

* * *

Sen. Ralph Recto is right. Send military doctors and engineering battalions to Metro Manila slums instead of fully armed soldiers who have been sowing suspicion and fear in these areas. "Doctors and engineering battalions would be an effective way of winning the hearts and minds of the residents instead of soldiers patrolling areas where activist groups are active," he said.

People in slums are so wanting in health services. "Doctors in fatigues would be a most welcome sight in places where public health services are lacking," Recto said in reaction to reports that soldiers have been prowling where communist agitation is reportedly taking place. "In these areas, disease is the enemy, not the dissidents."

They should bring medicines, not guns, he added. "If there are no NPAs to shoot at, then why not give vaccination shots to children instead?"

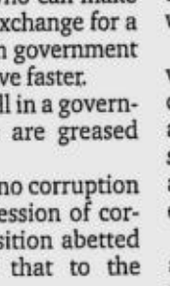
The military can stop insurgent uprising in the slums by fielding engineering battalions, the senator said. "They can do civic action. They can build schools, drain canals, fix health centers, pave alleyways," he said, adding they should bring hammers and saws instead of guns.

As to reports that soldiers are spreading anti-communist propaganda to dissuade residents from supporting militant party-list groups, Recto said, "Maybe they should add to their lectures tips on hygiene and public health, or conduct reading lessons or adult education." In place where there is dengue, they can teach the people how to get rid of the mosquito larvae, he said.

Recto said the non-armed approach is a better way of addressing what the military claims are threats to the State. This approach in neutralizing insurgency has been proven effective in Sulu, he added.

Mom

PASSION FOR REASON



Raul C. Pangalangan

MY MOM COOKED SO WELL, TREATING HER out was difficult, treating out my Dad, impossible. They would leave it to me to order the food, and then as I watch them take the first bite, I could almost hear their unspoken comments. Mom would be doing her silent arithmetic, computing how much cheaper it would have cost had she cooked it herself. Dad would be wondering in what ways the dishes don't taste home-cooked, and then he would ask for pepper to paper over his palate. And then together, they would chuckle if their son, despite his fancy education, had done an Erap and ordered the ambience.

In the course of this experimentation, I thought I had a bright solution. Why not choose a cuisine that wasn't in my Mom's repertoire? No arithmetic needed, no comparisons possible. After all, why compete with Mom's *kare-kare*, when sashimi changes the rules of the game altogether? Well, it didn't work. To start with, there were the chopsticks. Somehow sashimi tastes too raw when you use a silver fork. Second, it was, well, uncooked. Third and precisely for that reason, it didn't taste like it was cooked in the family home in Barrio Kapitolyo.

After much trial and error, I discovered the perfect solution: Chinese dimsum! It wasn't in their usual Kapitolyo menu. It was eatable without chopsticks, in small manageable bites, so that Mom could choose what was good, and then give the best parts to Dad—and best of all, priced comfortably for Mom's mental abacus.

Sometimes, when my Mom saw people paying with credit cards in restaurants, I would hear her mumbling, *Kawawa naman*. She was convinced that credit cards were for those who lived beyond their means. We tried to explain: Maybe they do it for convenience, for record-keeping, or just peace of mind? But, no, for Mom, the world should be kept simple.

Why complicate life with plastic? Why use Mastercard, and then seek life's most precious moments in what Mastercard can't buy? Rather why not find the precious in the day-to-day—or in Blake's classic: "To see the world in a grain of sand/And heaven in a wild flower/Hold infinity in the palm of your hand/And eternity in an hour"?

The one time she endured the urge toward the poetic was when we, the kids, then giddy college romantics, celebrated their wedding anniversary by visiting the exact house where she and Dad met, as if paying homage to a shrine, and it didn't look anywhere as grand or movie-like as we had imagined.

But mostly, she wasn't given to any sort of intellectualizing. If I told her that she had an almost Zen-like stance unto life, non-judgmental and finding concrete solutions to concrete problems, she would simply have shrugged it off as ridiculous. Why would anyone theorize about the refusal to theorize? "*Ah, may tawag pala dun*"—indeed, the truest Zen response to any attempt to reduce the world to words.

I recall when I was in college, a priest-uncle asked her, "*Kumusta 'yung anak mong aktibista*?" It was only then that she got worried. When I described what the democracy movement was working for, she summarized it so simply: "'*Yung mga may pagka*-Jose Rizal."

In hindsight, I could have explained it as living the Gospel in the here and now, and between her and me, the one filial duty that I must abide. You see, she lived a life of piety, saw her entire schedule in terms of Mass hours and benedictions, called Wednesday her Baclaran day, and without fail prayed the rosary as soon as she entered the car. When I was a restless teenager, and the family would drive to vacations in two cars, I announced to my passengers that we won't pray the rosary because those in the other car prayed for enough blessings to keep the entire MacArthur Highway safe.

During one of her chemotherapy sessions the past year (the only one, I confess, to which I accompanied her—I can't hold a candle to the myriad ways my brothers Junie and Dindo, and sisters Ditas, Rowena and Eileen, served her, hand and foot), I brought her several things to fight off boredom: my iPod with a customized "playlist" called "Mom's music," albums of family photos that my wife Beth lovingly put together, and two huge books on the Philippine revolution (she loved to read and do the crossword). This time, she set aside Aguinaldo, Bonifacio and Frank Sinatra, and preferred the photos of her grandchildren. I left the books with her, but months later brought them back home, unread. The iPod playlist is intact, likewise unplayed.

My mother, Julieta Cano Pangalangan, died on Feb. 9, 2007, more than a year after she was diagnosed with cancer and after a final stroke. I was some 10,000 miles away. I am currently teaching at Harvard, and when my phone rang at 3 o'clock in the morning in Cambridge, I knew I had to brace myself for the saddest news yet that in my life I would hear.

I am now back in Cambridge, and have resumed my work, but there is an emptiness that lingers, as if even when everything is going fine, there is a missing ingredient, an element that always will be lacking.

I know that Mom couldn't stand tributes of any kind, especially not for herself. Why waste time with words, when she could bake a delicious *leche flan* and talk to us while we ate? My siblings and I told her, when we were already grown adults, that as kids, when we arrived from school, we all intuitively knew if she wasn't home. The afternoon sun would be too intense, the air too hot and too dry, the food suddenly bland. Oh, how she loved hearing that—even if it took us 25 years to say it, but, for her, it was the most authentic compliment. To be missed with a sadness that a child's words cannot speak, and that now must still my pen as she would have wished 12 paragraphs ago.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

The 'unstated' in PERC's findings

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE PHILIPPINES MOVED AGAIN INTO THE center of international spotlight with the publication on Wednesday of the survey conducted by the Hong Kong-based, Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC). The survey found the Philippines as the most corrupt economy among 13 countries across Asia.

For the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo, which is facing a crucial mid-term election, there could not have been a worse time for the release of the survey. And it came as the US House of Representatives and Senate started hearings on the rising wave of murders of several hundreds of leftist political activists. The hearings in the US Congress added pressure on the administration to stop the killings, which have been condemned earlier by the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights and by the European Union.

These interventions have not only internationalized the issue of extrajudicial killings; they have also raised the murders as a major issue in the coming Philippine elections. Which is what makes them damaging to the government.

PERC's survey shows that the Philippines has surpassed Indonesia, graded the most corrupt Asian country in 2006. With a sample of 1,476 expatriate businessmen in the region, more than 100 of whom are based in the Philippines, the survey found that in a grading scale with zero as the best possible score and 10 the worst, the country scored 9.40 points, Last year, the Philippines' grade was 7.80.

The Philippines elbowed out Indonesia which, with a grade of 8.02, shared with Thailand the distinction of being the second most corrupt nations in the region.

Among the 13 economies, Malaysia stood in the middle. According to the survey, China was the seventh most corrupt nation; Vietnam and India, the ninth; and Vietnam, the 10th. Singapore beat Hong Kong as the cleanest economy.

The January-February survey findings rattled the government, sending it into a flurry of explanations, dismissing them as old hat and based on perceptions that did not take into account Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez's record. Gutierrez claims that the conviction rate in corruption cases involving government officials rose to 77 percent during January-March this year, up from 40 percent last year and 33 percent in 2005.

The Ombudsman says the list of convictions includes four municipal mayors, a metropolitan trial judge and a president of a state university. But none of them is a big fish. In environmentalist circles, it is known that fishermen throw the small fry they catch back to the sea.

PERC did not pretend to do anything more than polling resident businessmen on their perception of corrupt practices. The Philippines-based businessmen were not talking when they were asked about the Ombudsman's claims, their own day-to-day business dealings with the government, the kickbacks they have to pay to get contracts approved and their experiences through the bureaucratic mill and with the powerbrokers facilitating the transactions in the back rooms. The businessmen and government officials, including the Ombudsman, did not speak the same language about corruption.

The survey asked expat businessmen about the effectiveness of the judiciary in fighting corruption and the average citizen's tolerant attitude toward corruption as part of the business environment in which they are operating. Their feedback: "[I]t is bad and has been bad all along. People are just growing tired of the action and insincerity of leading officials when they promise to fight corruption."

In an interview with the INQUIRER, PERC's managing director Robert Broadfoot said the respondents cited the unresolved plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada. He said the case "has been dragging for years." He added, "then there's the opposition's charges (on corruption and electoral fraud) against President Arroyo."

The businessmen did not cite specific cases of corruption which victimized them. But the judicial environment in which corruption cases are dragging forms part of the perception. The expats are not in the business of blowing the whistle. It would be making them vulnerable to retaliation and harassment from the government. This is why they are talking about the judicial environment.

But Estrada's case is not exactly "old news," as some local Filipino businessmen would like to look at it dismissively. His case is a prime example of "undelivered" results.

An official of the Bankers Association of the Philippines commented that foreign businessmen may have made conclusions based on certain high-profile cases. "Corruption is endemic all around Asia," the official said. "It's just that there have been cases here in the limelight like the Piatco case," referring to the unresolved controversy over the Naia 3. The Piatco contract has been found by the Supreme Court and the Senate blue ribbon committee to be a corrupt transaction, and the contract has gone into international arbitration, indicating the government's incapacity to carry out the prosecution of corruption.

Even though these cases are long pending, they nevertheless form part of the perception. Perceptions are dangerous because they are important in making investment decisions, more than official statistics showing an increase in the number of convictions in corruption cases. Even though businessmen are not disclosing specific corrupt practices directly affecting them, it is the "unstated" that determines the damning perceptions in the surveys.

A 'choice platform' on AIDS

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

CHOICES, NOT JUST CONDOMS, ARE WHAT women at risk of HIV need to protect themselves.

Erica Gollub, a professor of epidemiology who has worked as a consultant to the Female Health Company, wonders why the global AIDS prevention community has yet to get behind the policy, adopted by the New York State AIDS Institute in 1992, of a "hierarchical counseling approach." Gollub describes "quality hierarchical counseling" as "urging women to use condoms whenever possible, with discussion of possible strategies (to get their male partners to use them). Information is then given, in order, about the other options, which include female condoms, microbicides, coitus interruptus (or withdrawal), fewer sexual partners, and even abstinence.

In the article "Choice is Empowering: Getting Strategic about Preventing HIV Infection in Women," published in the December 2006 issue of International Family Planning Perspectives, Gollub stresses that "a key ingredient is information in plain language about how HIV infects women—i.e., why condoms are the best protection. The beauty of such an approach is that it expedites information-sharing with the women who need it, and that new evidence can change the list itself, the order (of importance or efficacy) of methods and the counseling scripts."

Disturbing to Gollub is how much of the resistance to "hierarchical counseling," or to the less than 100-percent support for male condom use, is rooted in distrust of women—or at least in their ability to make clear-headed decisions.

Critics of giving women a whole menu of prevention options believe that "providing women with information on a menu of prevention methods assumes that they will not use male condoms. For example, a common argument against the promotion of the highly effective female condom is that it is appropriate for, or acceptable to, a very small percentage of the world's population and thus a far cry from ideal."

* * *

EVEN more annoying is the argument brought forward that "hierarchical messages are just too confusing to women—given so many choices, women might opt to use lower-efficacy methods under the assumption that they were protected at the same level as with a condom." Notes Gollub: "There is an implicit notion behind these arguments that what we are doing when we offer women more choices in protection is tempting them to move down from some imagined high level of protection they have at the outset."

But counselors, health providers and educators working in communities of at-risk women every day, says Gollub, "know only too well (that) a woman at high risk of STIs and HIV infection begins at the level of no protection, or almost no protection, and works up."

Each bit of information about an added method "amounts to a building block—raising and solidifying the wall that protects her from disease."

Studies have indicated, Gollub adds, that "women respond positively to the notion of choice and can digest complex messages especially when they are delivered through high-quality counseling. The feeling of having options is liberating and empowering. Women so counseled, regardless of educational background, social class and race, feel more confident about themselves, their bodies and their right to protection. They combine methods to arrive at the highest level of protection possible in their circumstances."

* * *

"INDEED," notes Gollub, "the patronizing quality of arguments against hierarchical counseling—with their implications that women can handle only simple prevention advice—harkens back to an era predating the consumer's right-to-know and women's health movements in the United States. The solution to a lack of perfect and simple choices is not to withhold information about the options that do exist. This is certainly not an approach that women at high risk of infection would elect for themselves."

Gollub turns testy at these put-downs of women. "Instead of the public health community worrying about insulting, demeaning and confusing women with too many choices, why don't we just 'tell it like it is' to the women who desperately need protection, and let them decide?"

"What will it take for us to change our HIV prevention paradigm and welcome the concept of choices for women?" asks Gollub.

* * *

IF women cannot trust the men in their lives to choose protection over pleasure, or to even think about protection, then women should be told that there are other options out there, options that will protect them regardless of their partners' attitudes or behavior.

"By energetically endorsing the female condom," Gollub suggests, "we could be reducing STIs and HIV infections as we speak. The undermining of this valuable protection device has worked to the detriment of women. By providing clear, easy-to-understand information, with visual aids, about the genitals and reproductive organs along with counseling on the female condom, we could greatly enrich HIV prevention services."

Gollub points out the way to wrapping our minds around the new paradigm: "Carrying through on our commitment to women's need for alternatives to the male condom means adopting the stance that for HIV prevention, something is better than nothing; providing women with options, even those with lower efficacy, is considerably better than offering none."

Her call: "Uniting now behind a choice platform—in research, policy and practice—and providing an adaptable framework to absorb new methods as they are developed and tested would prevent further waste of time. Finally, a choice platform is the prevention approach likely to make the greatest difference in reducing HIV incidence in women in the immediate future."

Soldier's idealism in battle

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

WHENEVER I ATTEMPT TO REDUCE THE growing pile of papers in my cubicle in the Ateneo de Manila History Department, I end up doing something else like: chatting by the water dispenser, checking my e-mail, or listening in on conversations exchanged between other faculty members. While eavesdropping, I have concluded that our junior faculty: Joed Tirol, Dave Lozada and Amiel Angeles (now in the United States to pursue a Ph.D.) are genuinely interested in military history. They enthusiastically discuss battles from Troy to Pearl Harbor and their cubicles contain maps, miniature models and soldiers. One of them even has what appears to be a Nazi uniform in a plastic bag.

Most engaging are their "war games" held outdoors in a large field on campus where students re-enact famous ancient battles in complete costume. Looking at pictures of these creative class reports, I wondered whether my students would be game enough to reenact the Battle of Mactan in 1521, or the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution led by Bonifacio in 1896 or that of the Philippine-American War in 1899.

Although I'm not as enthusiastic about battles as these gentlemen are, I would still want to know and understand the physical challenges of our struggle for nationhood. This reminded me of a poem in Tagalog composed by a woman from San Roque, Cavite in 1898. In its concluding stanza, it says of Aguinaldo: *Capitan Emilio hindi natatacot/ sa bala ng canon halos ganga palioc/ pananalig niya'y malaqui sa Dios/ at sa pintacasi Magdalenang bantog.*

Although this is a stray piece of literature, often overlooked in the larger scheme of things, this anonymous Caviteña makes references to weapons (*mahahabang guloc, sibat na boacue, barol, punal, sumpit, arcabus*), trenches and the weapons of the enemy complete with sound effects (*palconete't canon*, Revolver, Remington *ang putoc bung bung/ ang* Mauser *at riple ay pac bung pac bung/ at kung rumapido's caquila-quilabot/ dinaig pa yata elementong culog*). Surely, there is more to be uncovered if we care to look harder. This brings me to one of the relevant reactions to Wednesday's column, from Siegfried Herzog. It is worth sharing here:

"Your column today raised a number of interesting questions about soldiers' behavior in battle. Allow me a few comments. It is one thing to enlist in a revolutionary army, but idealism does not help much to prepare you to face the reality of battle. That's why, throughout history, trained troops have routinely beaten untrained opponents, even though their numerical advantage might have been huge. Revolutionary forces need to learn fast—the American revolution is a good illustration. The American revolutionaries had established militias, and some of their leaders had fought in the regular British army. And yet they came close to defeat. What helped them was foreign aid—the Prussian officer Von Steuben took over training in Valley Forge, and the French helped with money and troops. The Philippine revolutionaries, as far as I know, had little by way of experienced officers, hardly any foreign help and a crucial shortage of modern weapons. That many soldiers would panic when confronted by the disciplined fire of trained troops is very understandable and has happened throughout history in such situations. That untrained troops fire too early and enthusiastically is equally common—many battle accounts tell about the efforts of officers to keep their troops from firing too early—I think even the Roman centurions had to restrain the legionaries from throwing their spears too early! The use of knives might have been prompted by several factors—lack of rifles and ammunition, plus an advantage in fighting at close quarters, where the American troops would become disorganized, and their rifles, more of a hindrance than a help. It might be that fighting with knives was something the (Filipino) soldiers were experienced in, too. Probably it was a combination of these factors.

"A note on the issue of fraternity among troops—this does not arise just from patriotism—patriotism helps, but is rather abstract for many ordinary soldiers, not enough to make them risk life and limb. Soldiers fight for their comrades in arms, their buddies and armies that fostered small-group-cohesion fought the best. This has been so from the times when eight soldiers of a Roman legion shared a tent and a mule. The circular you cite recognizes the importance of this in keeping the fighting spirit strong. The sad truth is that this works in different situations, i.e. for armies fighting for a noble cause as well as for those fighting for an evil one.

"Anyway, the freedom struggle of those years is something the (Filipino) people can be proud of, even if, as you say, not all of those revolutionaries were heroes. Their story should not be forgotten. Do keep up the good work!"

One can only wish that the Philippine Military Academy had a complete course on Philippine military history. I would enroll there if it weren't so far up in Baguio.

Tomorrow afternoon at 2 p.m., I will be giving a talk on Chinese influences in Philippine or "Tsinoy" art. The talk will also serve as a comment to the six simultaneous shows on the Chinese Diaspora ongoing in the Ayala Museum in Makati. Readers are cordially invited.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Drug safety

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

A MAN WAKES UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT WITH diarrhea, gropes around and takes what he thinks are anti-diarrheal tablets. Next thing you know, he's trying to kill his wife.

Over in Cavite, men have started making decoctions out of a popular ornamental called coral plant, supposedly to enhance their virility. Yet as early as 1921 Leon Maria Guerrero, an authority on Philippine medicinal plants, already wrote about the plant being a dangerous cathartic, meaning it causes severe diarrhea. In another botany book, "Burkill's Dictionary of Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula," I found out that the plant was used for "criminal poisoning" in Latin America.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) estimates that there are some 2 million serious adverse drug reactions (ADRs) each year in the United States, leading to about 100,000 fatalities and making ADRs the fourth leading cause of death in the country.

We don't have estimates on such cases and fatalities in the Philippines, but I am certain they are quite high. There are probably cases where people die of the medicines they were taking, without the family ever realizing it. Many medicinal plants, for example, have low levels of the dangerous substances, but these can accumulate; so even the persons taking the decoctions may not know they are being slowly poisoned.

The causes of ADRs in the country include carelessness among health professionals, a lack of health literacy among Filipinos, inadequate instructions on drug products, and unclear advice from health providers. I'd say, even the barrage of drug advertising, by proclaiming particular medicines as safe—when in fact, no drug, not even your "ordinary" painkillers, not even your medicinal plants, is truly safe—contributes to ADRs.

The two cases I cited at the beginning of this article were brought up by speakers at the recent convention of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists. Dr. Kenneth Hartigan-Go, who is a physician specializing in pharmacology, gave the story about the anti-diarrheals, which I'll explain in greater detail in a while. Another speaker, Dr. Annabelle Reyes Borromeo, is a nurse and management expert who shared experiences from her work in American hospitals, including how Filipina nurses get into serious trouble because of a lack of consciousness about drug safety. I was the third speaker and I concentrated on cultural aspects that affect drug safety, including a discussion on some of the problems that come with traditional medicines.

The hospital pharmacists are your unsung heroines (and a few heroes . . . it's a very female profession). You rarely see them but they work quietly in the hospital pharmacies, checking and double-checking medicines that have been prescribed and preparing them in the right doses so they can be dispensed safely.

Outside the hospital though, we don't have these pharmacists checking on what we take, so I thought I'd take off from the horror stories shared at the convention and go straight to a very basic drug safety measure: Know what your medicine is.

Names, names

How do you get to know about the medicines you're taking? The key is the generic name which, in the Philippines, is printed in a box above the brand name. Unfortunately, medicines in other countries often have the generic names in very small print. Sometimes, the generic names aren't just printed.

The case Dr. Hartigan-Go gave as an example involved a man who had worked overseas and had brought home one of the medicines he had been prescribed while abroad. The name was Dia-tabs, which, as we know is an anti-diarrheal in the Philippines. But in the country the man was working, it was the brand name for a diabetes drug.

When diarrhea struck this overseas worker in the middle of the night, he forgot that his Dia-tabs was an anti-diabetic, not an anti-diarrheal. He took several tablets, basically overdosing himself with an anti-diabetic, and this caused chaos in his blood sugar, which then drove him into the psychosis that made him want to kill his wife. When you think more about it, those few tablets could have caused two deaths.

So, learn to recognize your medicines by their generic names, and what they do. This is especially important in our age of the Filipino diaspora. So many Filipinos come home from overseas, bringing with them medicines with missing labels, or with brand names that can be confusing.

But the brand name problem applies even to local drugs. Medicol, a common drug, used to be paracetamol. And then the manufacturers decided to change it to ibuprofen, which is also a pain killer but which requires different precautions. Paracetamol's side effects, caused by high and frequent doses, are mainly on the liver. Ibuprofen, on the other hand, even with the right dose, can cause severe allergy reactions, because people are sensitive to that drug and its relatives like aspirin.

Another reason why you need to know your medicine's generic name is to be sure that you don't "duplicate" it. If you consult two different doctors, as many Filipinos do, they may prescribe the same drug but with a different brand name. That could cause an overdose.

"Generic literacy" applies even to traditional medicine. The coral plant's scientific name is *Jatropha multifida*. One look at the plant and I could tell it was a relative of *Jatropha curcas* or *tubang-bakod*, which also has cathartic effects and which is being studied as a source of biofuels.

Remember, too, that drugs can interact with each other, so you have to be prepared by knowing what drugs you're taking.

For example, if your dentist wants to inject the local anesthetic lidocaine, you should inform her about the drugs that you're currently taking. Lidocaine can amplify the effects of such medicines as hypotensives (lowering blood pressure) and tranquillizers.

There is no such thing as a totally safe drug. Antihistamines or anti-allergy drugs, for example, often cause drowsiness. So if you need to drive, or handle machinery that requires alertness, you have to be extra careful about those medicines. Be aware, too, that these anti-allergy medicines are also often found in cold remedies.

How can you keep track of the generic names? For now, you might want to buy a copy of MIMS, available in most bookstores, but be aware that this is produced by the drug industry and contain very minimal information. It's very weak on safety issues, and does not include products that use medicinal plants. (This is understandable since such products are approved as food supplements rather than as drugs.)

I use MIMS mainly to double-check on the generic names of drugs, and then use that generic name to get more reliable information from medical textbooks and from the Internet. But be careful too when using the Internet; not all the information there is reliable.

'Food chain' in gov't corruption

PHILIPPINE LETTERS

THE CASE OF THE ANAHAWAN (Southern Leyte) officials found guilty of graft (involving a little over P16,000) clearly demonstrates the basic food chain. (INQUIRER, 3/11/07)

The "big fish" (be it the Ombudsman or ranking officials in any of the government branches) that did not benefit by way of a bribe from the "small fish" will do anything in their power to prosecute and make life miserable for (hunt and eat) the small fish while they (the big fish) go scot-free.

But don't lose heart because even the biggest crook has his own destiny—be it a hell of a life or a life in hell.

—VICTOR AFRICA, vgafrica1@verizon.net

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Coco levy eyed as source of campaign funds?

I READ FROM THE FEB. 25 ISSUE OF the INQUIRER that the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) has "expressed apprehension over the plan of President Macapagal-Arroyo to create a Coco Foundation that would manage proceeds from the sale of 26 million shares of the government in San Miguel Corp."

Like Willy Marbella, internal deputy secretary general of the KMP, I am afraid that the "creation of the foundation could be an attempt of the government to use the money for purposes other than those that would benefit coconut farmers." I concur with Marbella when he said that "the government could use the P130-billion of coco levy funds for the election campaign."

Finally, I am all with the KMP in its demand that the entire coco levy fund be returned in cash to the farmers, many of whom have been waiting in vain while the others are dying of old age.

—CRISOSTOMO B. VILAR, vice mayor, Pagsanjan, Laguna

Wishing to serve country

I WONDER WHY THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOple out there who think that by entering politics they will be able to realize their personal desire to help fellow Filipinos.

Obviously, there are innumerable ways by which they can help our people. But many of them would rather be politicians and public officials. They say they have a lot to share. But, do they really have "a lot to share" or "a lot to get"?

—DR. EDDIE R. BABOR, LL.B., full professor of Philosophy, Uptown Subdivision, Ubujan District, Tagbilaran City

Poor choices

THEY SAY THE YOUTH ARE THE HOPE of our nation, but the administration and the opposition refuse to see us and hear from us.

What happened to President Macapagal-Arroyo's promise to give priority to education and lift its quality? The country's premier state university is increasing its tuitions by 300 percent. Terror threats are in school campuses. Also, let us not forget the killing of three student leaders from the League of Filipino Students within a span of just one year.

INQUIRER.NET VOICES

Also, the Arroyo administration continues to promote globalization and liberalization while working for Charter change to open all Philippine natural resources to foreign ownership and exploitation.

The Filipino people should be made to realize that a vote for Team Unity is also a vote endorsing the anti-people policies and programs of the administration.

A word of warning to the opposition: Traditional politics is eroding its credibility among the people. If its candidates are running just to criticize the present administration, then they are guilty of abusing democracy.—**Lean Porquia, University of the Philippines in the Visayas (via e-mail)**

* * *

We should do better than hold an election that represents a choice between Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo only.

Estrada may be in jail; guilty or not, he is still a multimillionaire with powerful backers. He may ultimately be exonerated, after all, the Sandiganbayan judges are just human. He has many women, and he has two senators in his pocket. And it seems there is no more question that he really helped himself to the country's coffers.

And GMA? I don't know how history will judge her. It is possible that at one point she really wanted to serve her people well. But somehow, along the way, things, not of her doing, happened. Look at her husband and at what he and Joc-Joc Bolante did to ensure that she would be elected in 2004.

Look at what has happened to our military. I have a feeling that our military agreed to follow GMA's biddings because it could not in conscience support a high school dropout who was manipulated into wanting to become the leader of the Filipinos by no less than a former UP president.

The politicians continue to glorify and insult one another while the great masses of the Filipinos suffer.—**Cesar Torres, California (via e-mail)**

* * *

I would like to propose a debate between Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio and Manny Pacquiao on all issues: ranging from the economy to OFW concerns.

And then they can talk to the people of General Santos City about their own legislative agenda.

A candidate who runs for public office without any direction is like a headless chicken running in circles. —**Dante Faragas, San Jose, California (via e-mail)**

* * *

I've just read about Boracay being overcrowded and "over-abused" (yes, over-abused).

My wife and I had our honeymoon there more than a decade ago and we found it heavenly. The problem facing Boracay is the problem facing the country as a whole: lack of foresight.

It's not that too many tourists are coming. We surely welcome that. But it's the lack of proper infrastructure, program, policy and system to handle properly the island's visitors.

The Philippines is not a banana republic, all right—but it's a Band-aid republic. We come up with Band-aid solutions instead of preventing disasters from happening.

I'm so sad about the future of Boracay. Something must be done about its problems. I don't want somebody writing someday a book about the island and giving it the title, "Paradise Lost."—**Jerry Lalic, Ontario, Canada (via e-mail)**

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1. **1993, Feb 26 - New York, U.S.A.** World Trade Center bombing. **6 killed, thousands injured**
2. **2001, Sep 11- New York, U.S.A.** Airliner attacks: World Trade Center destroyed - **2,823 killed;** Pentagon damaged - **189 killed;** Plane crashed in Pennsylvania - **45 killed**
3. **2002, Oct 12 - Bali, Indonesia** Two night clubs bombed **202 killed, 300 injured**
4. **2002, Kuwait - Filka Island** Two American soldiers killed
5. **2002, Kenya - Mombasa** bomb attack on the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel, **14 killed**

   A simultaneous missile attack on Jewish airliner departing from Mombasa

- Plot for a 2nd wave of attacks targetting Library Tower in California, Sears Tower in Chicago, Plaza Bank in Washington, Empire State Building, New York.
- Shoe bomber operation to down two American airplanes
- Plot to destroy American military vessels and oil tankers in Straits of Hormuz, Gibralter and Singapore
- Plot to destroy the Panama Canal
- Plot to assasinate several former U.S. Presidents, including President Carter
- Plot to bomb night clubs frequented by American and British citizens in Thailand
- Plot to destroy buildings in the Israeli city of Elat by using planes from Saudi Arabia
- Plot to destroy American embassies in Indonesia, Australia and Japan
- Plot to destroy Israeli embassy in India, Azerbaijan, the Philippines and Australia
- Plot to destroy an Israeli airliner on Thailand soil
- Plot to hit American military bases and nightclubs in South Korea
- Financial support to hit American, Jewish and British targets in Turkey
- Plot to hit NATO headquarters in Belgium
- Plot to down 12 American airplanes full of passengers
- Plot to assassinate President Clinton in 1994 or 1995 when he visited the Philippines
- Plot to destroy an American oil company in Sumatra, Indonesia, owned by Jewish Henry Kissinger
- Assassination attempt on Pakistan's President Pervez Musharaf

Khalid in Manila: Terrorist by day, playboy by night

DESCRIBED AS THE MILITARY OPERAtions chief of al-Qaida, Kuwait-born Khalid Sheikh Mohammed has confessed to plotting more than 30 terrorist attacks from Australia to Azerbaijan and Panama to the Philippines.

A brother-in-law of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, Mohammed stayed in Manila in the 1990s, during which he laid the foundation for al-Qaida operations in Southeast Asia.

He is said to have conceptualized a "liquid bomb," which he tested in five locations in 1994, according to a police demolitions expert interviewed by the INQUIRER.

4 test explosions

Four of the test explosions took place in Metro Manila—at the Folk Arts Theater, the shoreline of Roxas Boulevard, a fastfood restaurant near Malacañang and a theater in Makati City. The bomb was also tested once in Cebu City.

In December 1994, the liquid bomb was tested aboard a Philippine Airlines flight to Narita, Japan, in which a Japanese passenger was killed and five others were injured.

In the aftermath of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, Mohammed fled to Manila with his nephew, Ramzi Yousef, who is currently serving a life term in a US prison for his role in the bombing.

'Operation Bojinka'

In January 1995, a fire broke out at the Josefa Apartments in Malate, Manila, that Yousef was renting. Police found chemicals, bomb-making materials and documents in a computer that revealed "Operation Bojinka," a plan to detonate bombs simultaneously on international flights

Police said Mohammed managed a carpet business in Parañaque City as a front, going in and out of the country up to 2000. Police described Mohammed as a "terrorist by day, playboy by night," who frequented Manila's nightclubs and introduced himself as a rich sheik.

Mohammed reportedly courted a dentist in Metro Manila and flew a helicopter over her clinic in Ermita in an effort to impress her.

Mohammed was arrested in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, in March 2003. *Reports from Alcuin Papa and Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

'I was responsible for 9/11,' al-Qaida's ...

From page A1

hammad Atta's pilot's license and even letters from al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

Although US officials had linked Mohammad to the 9/11 attacks and to several others, his confession was the first time he spelled out in his own words a panoply of global terror activities, ranging from plans to bomb landmarks in New York and London to assassination attempts against former US Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton and Pope John Paul II.

Mohammad indicated in the transcript that some of his earlier statements to CIA interrogators had been the result of torture. But he said that his statements at the tribunal on Saturday were not made under duress or pressure.

His actions, he said, were like those of other revolutionaries. Had the British arrested George Washington during the Revolutionary War, Mohammed said, "for sure they would consider him an enemy combatant."

Mohammed spoke before a combatant status review tribunal that has the narrow task of determining whether President George W. Bush had properly designated him an enemy combatant. Mohammed's confession will almost certainly be used against him if and when he is tried for war crimes by a military commission.

Mohammed was aided during the tribunal by a "personal representative," an Air Force lieutenant colonel who is not a lawyer. While not contesting his own guilt, Mohammed asked the US government to "be fair with people." He said that many people who had been arrested as terrorists were innocent.

Daniel Pearl's beheading

In a section of the statement that was blacked out, Mohammed confessed to the beheading of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl who was abducted in January 2002 in Pakistan while researching a story on Islamic militancy. Mohammed had long been a suspect in the killing.

Using his own words, the extraordinary transcript connects Mohammed to dozens of the worst terror plots attempted or carried out in the last 15 years.

His words drew al-Qaida closer to plots of the early 1990s, including the 1993 World Trade Center truck bombing. Six people with links to global terror networks have been convicted in federal court and sentenced to life in prison.

Mohammed said he was involved in planning the 2002 bombing of a Kenya beach resort frequented by Israelis and the failed missile attack on an Israeli passenger jet in the same country. He also said he was responsible for the 2002 bombing of two nightclubs in Bali, Indonesia, where 202 people were killed.

Other plots that he said he was responsible for included planned attacks on the Sears Tower in Chicago, the Empire State Building and New York Stock Exchange, the Panama Canal, and Big Ben and Heathrow Airport in London—none of which occurred.

Mohammed also said he was involved in planning attacks on US nuclear power plants and suspension bridges in New York, the destruction of American and Israeli embassies in Asia and Australia, attacks on American naval vessels and oil tankers around the world, and an attempt to destroy an oil company he said was owned by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger on Sumatra, Indonesia.

Mohammed said he was responsible for planning 28 individual attacks. The comments were included in a 26-page transcript released by the Pentagon, which blacked out some of his remarks.

Claim of torture

Mohammed also claimed he was tortured by the CIA after his capture in 2003 in Pakistan, according to an exchange he had with the military colonel who headed the three-member panel that heard his case.

"Is any statement that you made, was it because of this treatment, to use your word, you claim torture? Do you make any statements because of that?" the colonel asked Mohammed.

Portions of Mohammed's response were deleted from the transcript, and his immediate answer was unclear. He later said his confession read at the hearing was given without any pressure, threats or duress.

The colonel said that Mohammed's torture allegations would be "reported for any investigation that may be appropriate" and also would be taken into account in consideration of his enemy combatant status.

The Pentagon also released transcripts of the hearings of Abu Faraj al-Libi and Ramzi Binalshibh who refused to attend the hearings.

Binalshibh, a Yemeni, is suspected of helping Mohammed with the Sept. 11, 2001, attack plan and is also linked to a foiled plot to crash aircraft into London's Heathrow Airport. Al-Libi is a Libyan who reportedly masterminded two bombings 11 days apart in Pakistan in December 2003 that targeted President Pervez Musharraf for his support of the US-led war on terror.

Secret hearings

The hearings, which began last Friday, are being conducted in secret by the military as it tries to determine whether 14 alleged terrorist leaders should be declared "enemy combatants" who can be held indefinitely and prosecuted by military tribunals.

If, as expected, the 14 are declared enemy combatants, the military would then draft and file charges against them. The detainees would then be tried under the new military commissions law signed by President George W. Bush last October.

Hearings for six of the 14 have already been held. The military is not allowing reporters to attend the sessions and is limiting the information it provides about them, arguing that it wants to prevent sensitive information from being disclosed.

No independent observers

The 14 were moved last September from a secret CIA prison network to the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, where about 385 men are being held on suspicion of links to al-Qaida or the Taliban.

Legal experts have criticized the US decision to bar independent observers from the hearings. The Associated Press has filed a letter of protest, arguing that it would be "an unconstitutional mistake to close the proceedings in their entirety."

The military held 558 combatant status review tribunals between July 2004 and March 2005, and the panels concluded that all but 38 detainees were enemy combatants. Those 38 were eventually released from Guantanamo. *Reports from AP and New York Times News Service*

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LAKAS CMD is the most trusted party - SWS Survey

When Filipinos think of a political party that gives the most benefits to the people, one party name stands out: **LAKAS CHRISTIAN MUSLIM DEMOCRATS (LAKAS CMD).**

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CC. CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

SA ALING PARTIDONG PULITIKAL, SA LISTAHANG ITO, TUMUTUKOY ANG MGA SUMUSUNOD? (ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

To which political parties, in this list, do the following apply? (ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

(SHUFFLE CARDS)	LAKAS	LP	NP	KAMPI	PMP	BM	OTHER PARTY	NO PARTY	DK/R
145. MARAMING NAGAGAWA NA PINAKIKINABANGAN NG MGA MAMAMAYAN *(Does many things that benefit the citizens)*	23%	10%	5%	5%	10%	12%	3%	28%	11%
146. MAY MAKATOTOHANANG PLATAPORMA *(Has a realistic platform)*	18	12	8	6	9	9	4	29	12
147. MAY MGA PINUNONG MARANGAL *(Has noble leaders)*	18	11	6	7	9	7	4	31	12
148. MATAPAT SA TUNAY NA KALOOBAN NG MGA MIYEMBRO NG PARTIDO *(Faithful to the true will of the party members)*	15	11	8	7	10	8	5	31	12
149. KUMAKALAP NG MGA KANDIDATONG TUNAY NA KWALIPIKADO *(Recruits candidates who are truly qualified)*	17	11	8	6	9	8	5	31	12
150. NAKIKIPAG-UGNAYAN SA MARAMING SEKTOR KAGAYA NG MAGSASAKA, MANGGAGAWA, KATUTUBO, KABATAAN, ATBP. *(Interacts with many sectors, like farmers, workers, indigenous peoples, youth, etc.)*	16	7	6	6	10	17	4	29	11

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2 lamppost suppliers paid

'Payment ... almost a done deal,' says Visayas Ombudsman

By Jolene Bulambot and Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—AN ORDER OF THE VISAYAS OMBUDSMAN TO stop the payment of allegedly overpriced lampposts installed in three Metro Cebu cities in December last year for the Association of Southeast Asian (Asean) summit might have turned moot after it was learned yesterday that payments had already been made.

Of the P120 million that the Department of Public Works and Highways allotted for the project, only 15 percent, or about P18 million, have not been paid to the two suppliers of the lampposts, the Ombudsman found.

It was "almost a done deal," Ombudsman Director Virginia Santiago said.

The DPWH offered to install the lampposts, at a cost of P200,000 each, at the Cebu International Convention Center, the main venue for the summit, but it was rejected by Gov. Gwen Garcia. The lampposts installed by the province at the CICC only cost P50,000 each, including the cost of wiring and other installations.

Those installed by the DPWH in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-lapu cost from P83,000 to a staggering P300,000 each. The Ombudsman started a probe amid claims that the unit cost for the lampposts acquired by the DPWH was only P11,000, or P30,000 including installation.

Santiago said she would meet with Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez in Manila today to decide,on what action to take in view of these developments.

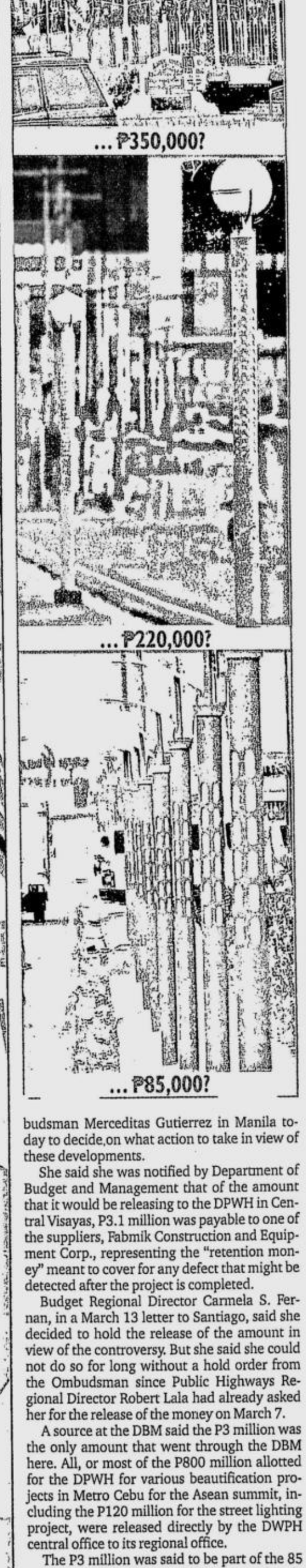
She said she was notified by Department of Budget and Management that of the amount that it would be releasing to the DPWH in Central Visayas, P3.1 million was payable to one of the suppliers, Fabmik Construction and Equipment Corp., representing the "retention money" meant to cover for any defect that might be detected after the project is completed.

Budget Regional Director Carmela S. Fernan, in a March 13 letter to Santiago, said she decided to hold the release of the amount in view of the controversy. But she said she could not do so for long without a hold order from the Ombudsman since Public Highways Regional Director Robert Lala had already asked her for the release of the money on March 7.

A source at the DBM said the P3 million was the only amount that went through the DBM here. All, or most of the P800 million allotted for the DPWH for various beautification projects in Metro Cebu for the Asean summit, including the P120 million for the street lighting project, were released directly by the DWPH central office to its regional office.

The P3 million was said to be part of the 85 percent that was supposed to have already been paid to Fabmik Construction and the other supplier, Gampik Construction, Santiago said.

However, she said, she still had to find out how much of the paid amount went to the two companies.



NPA denies villagers stopped rebs from attacking

BAGUIO CITY—AN OFFICIAL OF the New People's Army has denied a military report that unarmed villagers in an Abra town had barred communist rebels last weekend from attacking a village there by acting as human shields.

Ka Diego Wadagan of the NPA's Agustin Begnalen Command based in Abra, described the military report as a "farce" and called regional military spokesperson, Lt. Jose Ilarde who released the report, as "a liar."

Ilarde said in an earlier report that the residents of Danac West, a village outside Boliney town in Abra, threw a human shield around an Army patrol base after getting wind of an impending attack by 40 communist rebels.

"The truth is, an NPA unit was in the area to conduct regular mass work, help the people in economic work, launch education and training sessions, provide health services, organize and reinforce socio-political-cultural institutions, and help resolve contradictions among the people," Wadagan said in a statement.

Hiley Timmangen, a resident of Barangay Danac East in Boliney, also belied the military report.

"It did not happen. Nothing like that happened. I do not know where that kind of report came from," he told the INQUIRER by telephone.

He said he was in Danac East on Sunday and he did not hear any story from any of his relatives from both Barangays Danac East and Danac West.

"Paranoia must have caught up with the troops of the Charlie Coy, 77th Infantry Batallion, acting as cadre force of the Army detachment in Barangay Poblacion, Boliney," Wadagan said.

"Because contrary to what the military wants to project, the Army troopers belonging to the 77th IB and the 41st IB are isolated from the people due to human rights violations, among which is the murder of John Maximo in Baoyan, Boliney, in 2006," Wadagan said.

Maximo was a farmer from Tubo town who was married to a native of Barangay Baoyan in Boliney.

Wadagan accused the Army's 5th Infantry Division and the 503rd Brigade, under the Northern Luzon command, of "resorting to black propaganda, extrajudicial killings and other forms of human rights violations."

"They convey to the media illusory battle reports," he said.

He cited another military report which he said did not happen. He said the military reported an encounter between soldiers from the Army's 41st IB and NPA members in Bucay, Abra, on Feb. 13 that led to the arrest of three suspected rebels and seizure of several firearms. *Desiree S. Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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ROUNDUP

Another power tower bombed

ILIGAN CITY—Unidentified armed men bombed anew a tower of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco), this time in Sugod in Marawi City, a company official said. Pet Chong, Transco communications officer, said the attack at Tower 19 of Agus 2 grid came around 11 p.m. on Wednesday. The tower is part of the 138-kilovolt Kibawe line system. Chong said the attack failed to disrupt power supply because of Transco's back up system. On Sunday, armed men also blasted two towers here and in Lanao del Norte. Authorities are looking at extortionists and other armed groups as responsible for the attacks.

Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao

Hong Kong-Davao route

DAVAO CITY—Hong Kong Air will fly the Davao-Hong Kong route starting May, according to Wanda Teo, president of the National Association of Independent Travel Agents. The airline is currently working on landing rights at the Davao International Airport, she said. It plans to launch two flights per week—Tuesdays and Sundays—with a 164-seat Boeing aircraft.

Judy Quiros, Inquirer Mindanao

Radio van bombed

ILIGAN CITY—Unidentified men set on fire a mobile broadcast unit of Radio Mindanao Network in Cagayan de Oro City early Tuesday. In a statement aired over dxCC radio station in Cagayan de Oro, RMN said two men riding on a motorcycle lobbed a homemade bomb on the van parked outside the station at about 2 a.m. The fire also caught a portion of the wall near the van.

Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao

2 hurt in ambush

COTABATO CITY—Two persons were wounded when unidentified armed men believed to be extortionists ambushed a bus at the Shariff Kabunsuan-Maguindanao boundary on Monday. Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the attackers fired at the Husky bus at about 6:30 p.m. as it passed Datu Odin Sinsuat in Shariff Kabunsuan and Midtimbang in Maguindanao. The bus came from General Santos City and was headed for this city. Authorities have yet to name those wounded.

Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

2 Transco towers attacked

TUBOD, Lanao del Norte—Unidentified men bombed two transmission towers of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) in Lanao del Norte on Sunday night. Transco communications officer Pet Chong said the two towers were located in Barangay Pugaan, Iligan City, and in Barangay Abaga, Balo-i, Lanao del Norte. Chong said some areas were briefly affected by the power trip. Col. Reynard Ronnie Javier, head the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade based in Barangay Ditucalan in Iligan, said the attackers used improvised explosives. Transco estimated the damage at around P3 million. Last week, unidentified men also stole the iron bolts holding a Transco steel tower in Maramag, Bukidnon, causing the tower to fall and plunging the cities of Malaybalay and Valencia into darkness for nearly 12 hours.

Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao

Punta Fuego coastal cleanup

NASUGBU, Batangas—A high-end beach resort organized its residents and shareholders to clean parts of the 800-meter coast at the Peninsula de Punta Fuego, Barangay Balaytigue here on March 10. Marge Dayrit, communications manager of Club Punta Fuego, said the resort had partnered with 30 volunteers from Eureka Diving and Landco Pacific for the cleanup. Submerged at a depth of five to 30 feet, the group was divided into diving and snorkeling enthusiasts, who recovered non-biodegradable materials, such as tires, syringes, slippers, styrofoams, empty bottles, metals and plastics from the sea. *Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Fake Comelec IDs

STA. ROSA CITY—Two men were held by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation on Monday for possessing fake voter's identification cards from the Commission on Elections. NBI-Laguna chief Olivo Ramos said unscrupulous politicians could be planning to use bogus IDs to let "flying voters" cast their ballots. The suspects—Jean Mark Castillo, 18, and Jake Robcy Cansanay, 20, both of Calamba City—have been charged with falsification of public documents and were jailed at the NBI provincial office here. They admitted to buying the IDs for P50 from a photo studio in Barangay Parian, Calamba, so they could get NBI clearances for their job applications.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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NEGOSYO

Maguindanao mayoral bet wounded in ambush

By Jeoffrey Maitem and Nash Maulana
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—GUNMEN AMBUSHED A mayoral aspirant, who was on his way to the Maguindanao provincial capitol in Shariff Aguak town to file his certificate of candidacy yesterday morning.

Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said Datu Kagui Salendab, who was running for mayor in Paglat town, and two others were wounded, but one person died.

"This is politically motivated. We hope that the incident will be resolved soon so there will be no more retaliation," Ando said.

It was the first case of politically-related violence in Maguindanao since police declared the provinces one of the "areas of concern" early this year.

The car bearing Salendab and his party was passing by President Quirino town in Sultan Kudarat when it was fired upon by motorcycle-riding men, Ando said.

Salendab's driver, who was identified only as Oscar, died on the spot, Ando said.

Also wounded were the aspirant's wife Huda and a relative, Abubakar Salendab.

Except for the ambush, the filing of certificates of candidacy by Maguindanao politicians went on without hitches.

Gov. Andal Ampatuan took time to meet with influential personalities of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, who filed their certificates of candidacy.

One of them was outgoing Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar, flanked by his three "first ladies" who are all seeking local elective posts—for governor, for mayor of Lamitan town in Basilan, and for member of the Basilan provincial board.

Akbar said he was running for congressman of the lone district of Basilan against former Mayor Hajiman Salliman of Sumisip town. Outgoing Basilan Rep. Abdulgani Salapuddin is running for governor.

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Workers of the Cebu City government deliver portable toilets to victims of the Mandaue City fire, the biggest to hit the city in recent memory.

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Power supply shortage seen serious in 2010

BAGUIO CITY—POWER SHORTAGES WON'T be a problem during this year's midterm elections, but the country's electricity supply may be disrupted in 2010, the next presidential election, unless new power plants are built, an official of the Department of Energy said here on Wednesday.

Assistant Secretary Francisco Delfin Jr. said power supply remains steady, so power interruptions on Election Day on May 14 is improbable.

He was reacting to comments about blackouts that occurred during previous election periods.

Delfin joined Diwa Gunigundo, deputy governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and four Cabinet secretaries in the Baguio leg of a national economic roadshow at the Baguio Country Club.

Delfin said the current capacity of existing state and private power facilities comes up to 10,600 megawatts, and a combined surplus of 3,000 MW.

But between 2007 and 2010, investors have to be convinced to build new plants because of an anticipated increase in demand from new industries that are developing during that period.

"Between 2007 and 2010, there is hardly any active power plant project in the country. The only exception is the 9 MW wind farm in Bangui, Ilocos Norte, and a 30 MW plant owned by the Philippine National Oil Co.," he said.

"The problem will come in 2010 because we will be retiring old power plants such as Hopewell and Malaya [at a time] when peak demand will increase."

The loss of these plants will mean a cut in the country's surplus power to 2,000 MW, he said.

"These projections are independent of any electoral activity," he said, because the calculations are based on a power development plan that is now guided by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

He told the forum that government's energy agenda is to reduce household energy costs by initiating projects that will free the country from its dependence on imported petroleum.

Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Trader to drop US citizenship

OBANDO, BULACAN—A BUSINESSMAN, fondly called by residents here as the "Pinoy tortilla king in the United States," wanted to drop his American citizenship so he could run for Obando mayor in the May 14 elections.

Orencio Gabriel, 55, filed a case to renounce his American citizenship on Thursday before Judge Romeo Quilantang of the municipal trial court (MTC) here.

Under the law, a Filipino citizen, who acquired a foreign citizenship through naturalization, can only run for public office in the Philippines if he renounces his foreign citizenship.

Gabriel is expected to file his candidacy on March 23 under the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP).

He joined Genuine Opposition (GO) senatorial candidates, former Sen. Loren Legarda and reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson, and gubernatorial candidate, Vice Gov. Aurelio Plamenco, and vice gubernatorial candidate, Board Member Daniel Fernando, in a campaign sortie in Pulilan town on Wednesday.

Gabriel, who has been running his Mexican food and restaurant business in San Diego, California, said he wanted to end his 14-year American citizenship to serve his home province.

In the US, Gabriel had supported projects of the local government by financing the construction of a number of school buildings, bridges, roads, and churches.

He said his mother had asked him to join the mayoral race to bring progress to his hometown. *Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*

GMA, JdV, Ermita bailiwicks are 'free zones'

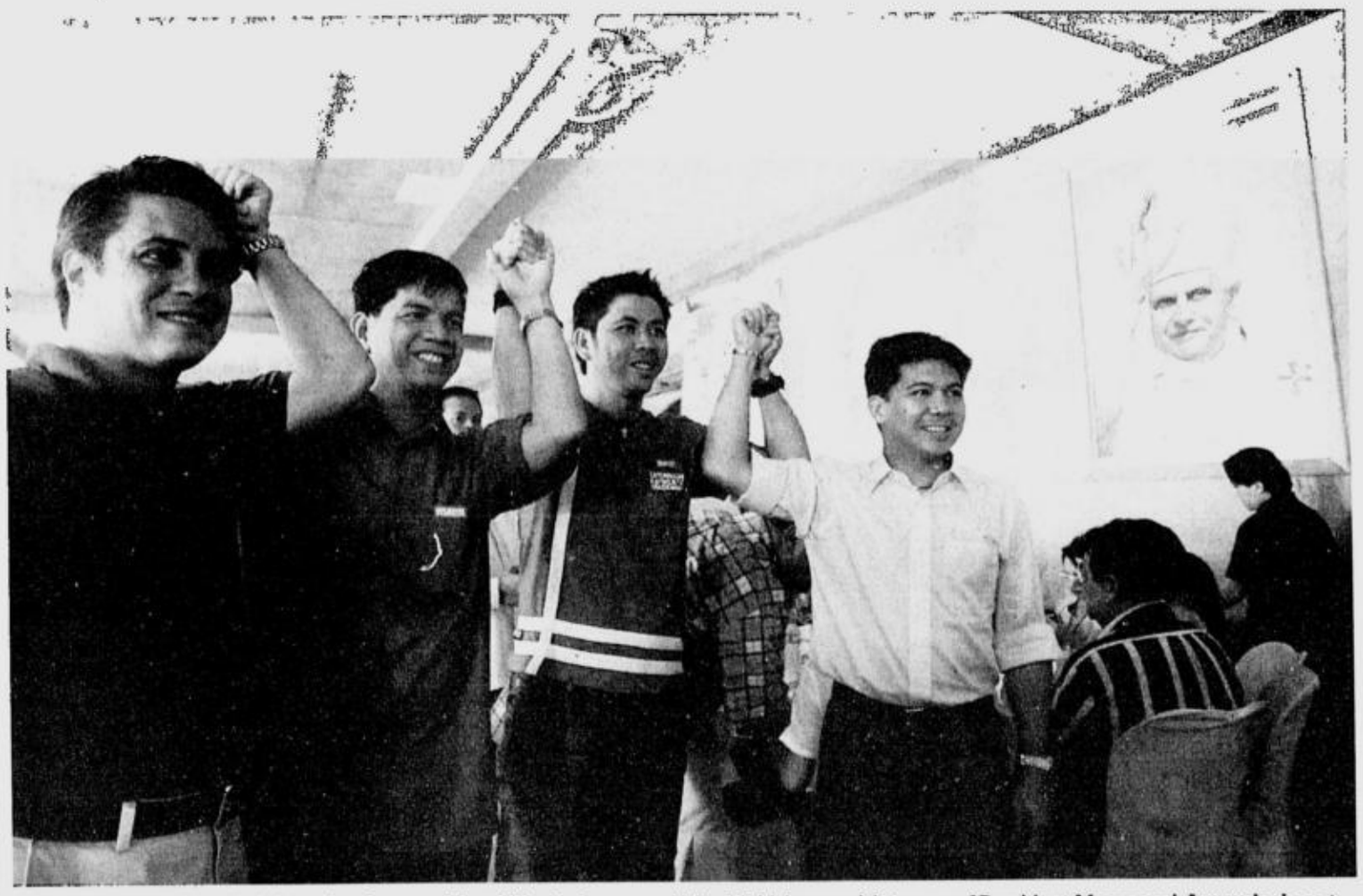
By Michael Lim Ubac

PAMPANGA, PANGASINAN AND Batangas—bailiwicks of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Speaker Jose de Venecia and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita—will be declared "free zones" by the administration coalition, according to a top official of the ruling party Lakas-CMD.

Ray Roquero, Lakas executive director, said the move was the "consensus" of coalition leaders who comprised the arbitration body formed by the President to address conflicts arising from two or more allies contesting the same local elective post.

The official announcement will be made soon, possibly after today's meeting of the arbitration body, Roquero told the INQUIRER.

He said the modus vivendi among Malacañang allies would ensure that administration candidates would continue to toe the coalition line, and thus help propel most of its senatorial candidates to victory.



CANDIDATES of the administration Senate ticket Mike Defensor and Migs Zubiri pay a visit to one of President Macapagal-Arroyo's closest friends, Pampanga Board Member Lilia Pineda, wife of alleged "jueteng" lord Bong Pineda, during Mrs. Pineda's birthday recently. LYN RILLON

'Contentious' areas

Moreover, Roquero said, the coalition had already resolved about 90 percent of the "contentious" areas across the country.

"This will change the face of politics," he said, pointing out that for the first time (except for the three provinces), common candidates for local posts would be supported by political parties belonging to the administration.

"That means you eliminate your potential tough opponent, making the few opposition candidates posing no serious threats in the local political derby," he said.

A common candidate, also dubbed the official candidate of the coalition, enjoys both national funding and local machinery of the administration.

Equity of incumbent

Of the three administration but hotly contested areas, Pampanga and Batangas can claim to enjoy the advantage of equity of the incumbent.

But the reelection bid of Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid, the highest Lakas official in the province, is being challenged by Board Member Lilia Pineda, local chair of Ms Arroyo's Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino party.

Pineda, the wife of alleged "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda and close friend of Ms Arroyo, boasts of the support of 17 mayors.

In Pangasinan, the arbitration body had to declare the gubernatorial race a free zone since Lakas Gov. Victor Agbayani was not eligible for reelection, said Roquero.

But Agbayani wants his wife Jaimi to secure the endorsement of the coalition, over the objections of Lakas Vice Gov. Oscar Lambino and Kampi Rep. Amado Espino (2nd district). Both Lambino and Espino intend to join the gubernatorial race.

'Common candidate'

Roquero made it clear, though, that Speaker De Venecia, the Lakas national president, would be the "common coalition candidate" in the fourth district of Pangasinan.

"Kampi is not fielding any candidate in De Venecia's district," he said. He stressed that Dagupan City Mayor Benjamin Lim and former Police Director General Arturo Lomibao have yet to firm up their decision on the possibility of challenging De Venecia.

In Batangas, gubernatorial candidates Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos and incumbent Gov. Armand Sanchez belong to Lakas and the pro-administration Liberal Party (Atienza wing). A third candidate and erstwhile Malacañang ally, Santos' brother-in-law Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, has since transferred to the opposition.

To make things worse for either Recto and Sanchez, Ermita's son Edwin has been chosen by Santos as her running mate. The tandem has received the backing of Recto's younger brother and Santos' husband, reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto, who is running under the Team Unity slate.

Edwin's bid

Ermita himself confirmed that his son Edwin, a banker, had already made up his mind to join politics.

He told reporters yesterday that Edwin had run against Ricky in the 1998 vice gubernatorial race. "Although he lost due to inadequate preparations, it only proves that he is not a neophyte when it comes to courting the votes of Batangueños," he said.

"Name recall" will help the young Edwin win, he said.

"We, too, have done good things to Batangas, especially in my district. I hope this will be positive for Edwin's candidacy. Of course, his biggest advantage as a vice gubernatorial candidate is his team-up with Mayor Vi Santos-Recto ... who is very strong (politically)," Ermita said.

His advice to his son: "He should put his heart into politics, immerse himself with the people. Politics is being with people; being serious about wanting to help his constituents ... to better their lives."

Cebu politics

The picture is not as rosy in Cebu, although the province had given Ms Arroyo a million vote lead over actor Fernando Poe Jr. in the 2004 presidential derby.

"Action on Cebu's problems will be made in a meeting (today)," said Roquero who then quipped. "It will be a make, not break meeting."

Reelectionist Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia has yet to join a national party after bolting Lakas, but she and her allies have already formed the local alliance "One Cebu."

Comprising the arbitration body are De Venecia and Rep. Marcelino Libanan (Lakas), Camarines Sur Luis Villafuerte Sr. (Kampi), Rizal Rep. Jack Duavit (Nationalist People's Coalition), Manila Mayor Lito Atienza (Liberal Party) National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales (Partido Sosyalista Demokratiko ng Pilipinas), and former Negros Oriental Rep. Miguel Romero (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino).

Legarda says gov't should stop paying for bad debts

By Norman Bordadora

GENUINE OPPOSITION SENAtorial candidate Loren Legarda is for the repudiation of the country's bad debts to have more government allocation for much-needed basic services such as public health and education.

Legarda, a former senator, made the call in a recent campaign sortie in Davao City. She called for the review of the country's debts, proposing that only loan obligations the people genuinely benefitted from be paid by the government.

"As for those debt that we really need to pay, we should look into creative ways on how we can honor them while still having enough for our people," Legarda said.

"We can negotiate for such (debt swap) arrangements as debt for education or debt for the environment," she added.

The government's debts now stand at more than P3 trillion pesos. Some 44 percent of it is owed to foreign creditors.

Under the debt swap arrangements, the Philippine government might be able to negotiate a cancellation of some of its debts in exchange for increased allocation for education, health or environmental conservation, Legarda said.

"Cancelling debts that never benefitted the country would mean more money for our people's needs," Legarda said.

Legarda has said that a growth rate of more than five percent is not enough for the people to feel the benefits of economic gains.

"We should have at least a growth rate of seven percent for a decade for that to happen," she added.

At least 40 percent of the government's annual budget goes to debt servicing. Efforts by nongovernment organizations to lobby for the repudiation of bad debts, like those used for the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, have failed to change government policy on the debts.

Lakas execs defend choice of Ermita son for Vilma

ELEKSYON 2007

BATANGAS CITY—OFFICIALS OF the ruling Lakas-CMD in Batangas defended the party's decision to field the son of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita as running mate of Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos in the gubernatorial race.

Hernando Perez, a former justice secretary and Lakas chair in Batangas, said he was the one who nominated Ermita's son Edwin to be Vilma's partner.

In a phone interview, Perez said nobody from the party nominated anyone else.

Mark Leviste, nephew of detained former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste, was among the Lakas members who openly criticized Secretary Ermita's efforts to push Santos' candidacy.

The younger Leviste said that under party rules, leaders should call for a meeting and set a convention, where members would nominate and elect their candidates for various positions representing the party.

"I'm saddened by the timeliness of the manifestation and how it was conducted. If these were signs of things to come, we should all be worried, " said Leviste in a text message sent to the INQUIRER.

Perez, however, said that even before the party met two weeks ago, Leviste had already been "offering himself" as a likely running mate to incumbent Gov. Armand Sanchez and retired Gen. Nestor Sanares, another candidate for governor.

On Monday, in front of thousands of Batangas residents at the provincial capitol, at least 20 disgruntled members of the Lakas-CMD quit the country's most dominant political party and joined President Macapal-Arroyo's Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) in a mass oath-taking ceremony.

Stressing that he is confident of winning the polls, Leviste said, "If I don't get chosen, maybe I'll run as an independent candidate for vice governor."

Two days after she declared her decision to run for governor, Santos met with top officials of the Iglesia ni Cristo on Wednesday, a move seen as a way to get the nod of the influential religious group.

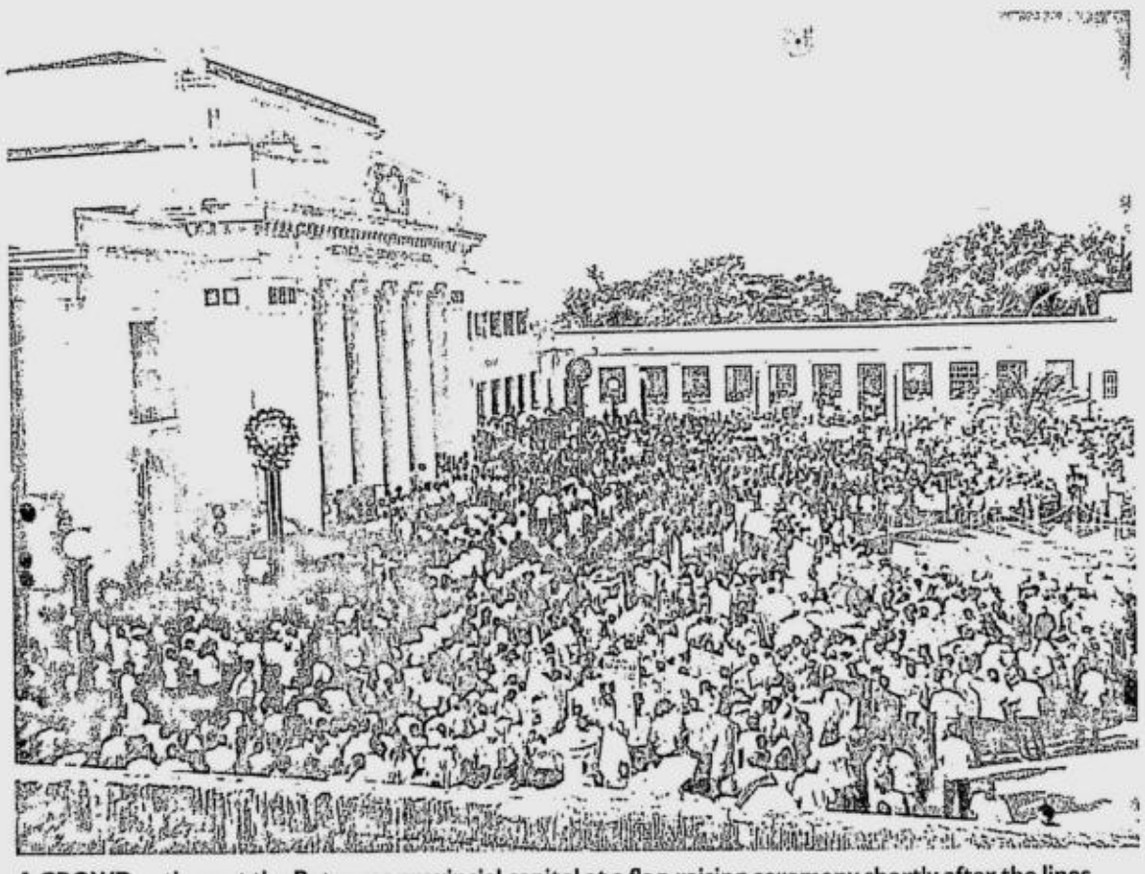
Together with her chosen running mate Edwin Ermita and some of her staff members, Santos arrived at the INC chapel here at around 10 a.m. for a 40-minute closed door meeting with several church officials.

"It was just a courtesy call. I hope it (the meeting) will not be misinterpreted. I went to see the officials of Iglesia ni Cristo just to pay my respect," she said.

When asked if she directly sought the help of the religious group, she replied that she did not.

"I just told them that I'm running for governor. We all know that they do not give their answer right away. Maybe they will decide (before the end of the campaign period)," she said.

Santos said she was happier now that she had settled her differences with her brother-in-law, incumbent Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, who had announced his plan to run against her for the province's top post.



A CROWD gathers at the Batangas provincial capitol at a flag-raising ceremony shortly after the lines were drawn in the province's political battle. MARLON RAMOS/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Ricky is the older brother of Santos' husband, reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto.

"I'm happier now because we were able to fix the problem within the family. As I've said before, the family is more important than politics," Santos said.

Although she has not talked with Ricky since announcing her candidacy last Monday, Santos said they had been exchanging text messages.

"I texted him 'I love you.' I told him that I thanked him for defending me against those who belittle my skills," she said.

Santos also said he might opt to run for congressman in the fourth district to avoid the possibility of them facing each other in the elections.

"There's nothing definite yet. Ricky also asked for one week before he makes his decision. So, let's just wait for him," she said.

Santos defended Edwin Ermita against people who accused him of using his father's influence just to be named her running mate.

She said she would definitely pick Ermita as her vice governor "because I need a banker to help me in the capitol." *Marlon Alexander Luistro and Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

MNLF to commemorate 1968 Jabidah Massacre

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE MORO National Liberation Front (MNLF) would commemorate its 40th anniversary on Sunday with prayers, mainly for the victims of the so-called Jabidah Massacre.

In March 1968, up to 28 Moro youths died after they were allegedly executed for defying an order of then President Marcos to launch attacks on Sabah.

The Sabah invasion was coded Merdeka (freedom) and was aimed at getting back the island-region from Malaysia. Sabah is historically part of the Sultanate of Sulu but came under Malaysia's stewardship under a lease agreement.

The Jabidah carnage, which took place on Corregidor Island, eventually led to the formation of the MNLF.

The MNLF waged a 30-year war—which led to the deaths of thousands of Moros and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of others—against the government.

It eventually signed a peace deal in 1996.

Ustadz Habib Zail Jali, MNLF spiritual adviser, said the devotional prayers would be followed by offerings of four legged animals such as goat, sheep or cattle.

"There's not much fanfare," he said.

Jali said other MNLF members might have a formation or a parade.

"But we will observe the 40th year anniversary with more prayers," he said.

Bitting Jalaidi, a ranking leader of the MNLF's Lupah Sug State Revolutionary Command in Sulu, said they want to instill among young Moros the importance of remembering the Jabidah Massacre.

"It should always be honored and remembered and inculcated in their memory so that they will not forget our long years of struggle," he said.

Jalaidi, now 42, said his parents always told him about the massacre, where 300 Moro fighters were slaughtered based on MNLF accounts.

He said his children also know about it.

"I want my children to remember and appreciate why we keep on sacrificing for self determination, until now, we are still in struggle," Jalaidi said.

In Camp Jabal Uhod in Barangay Bitanag in Panamao, Sulu, the MNLF prepared some sort of a festivity.

"It's a celebration," Al Mujahid Biao, MNLF deputy chief for military affairs, said.

Jali said the MNLF will also perform a Qaparah (atonement) for "the return of the executive council of 15 to the mainstream MNLF."

The council, composed of senior MNLF leaders, revolted against Misuari and ousted him from the helm of the erstwhile rebel group.

Last year, the council agreed to dissolve itself and hand back the leadership to Misuari, who remains in jail for the 2001 uprising of his followers in Sulu, which killed nearly a hundred people.

"Its worth to celebrate our anniversary because of their (Council of 15) return and the continuous assurance from the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to retain the MNLF's observer status and membership," Jali said. *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

MILF says GMA kept peace talks alive

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBeration Front (MILF) welcomed President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive to the military to uphold the primacy of the peace process.

Jun Mantawil, head of the MILF peace panel secretariat, said MILF chair Murad Ebrahim will issue an official policy statement on the peace process as a response to the President's directive.

Last week, Murad said the government has offered to grant the Moro people's right to self-determination and branded this as "a breakthrough."

"We remain optimistic all these years. As long as the peace process is moving, we continue to be optimistic, that's the best thing for us to do," Murad said.

He said skirmishes involving MILF fighters and the military are expected to be reduced because of the ceasefire mechanism in place in conflict areas.

"These pocket wars, although hurting us and the entire Bangsamoro people, should not stop us from seeking the path to the achievement of genuine peace," the MILF chair said.

Mantawil said the President's directive would "somehow help restore the people's confidence in the dragging peace process."

Mantawil said the order restraining the military from using artillery and aerial bombing should have been given earlier. He said the MILF hopes the military will comply with the directive.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, warned last week that the peace talks were on the verge of collapse as fighting between MILF and soldiers continued in interior villages of Midsayap, North Cotabato.

At least 17 rebels and a soldier were killed during the fighting that started on March 12. At least 7,000 civilians also fled their homes for fear of being caught in the crossfire. *Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

MEMBERS of Nueva Ecija's Barangay Defense System keep themselves busy with livelihood projects, like this charcoal making business, made possible by the peace and order campaign of Gov. Tomas Joson III and his brother, Vice Gov. Mariano Cristino Joson.

ANSELMO ROQUE/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

Josons say bets need not pay rebs in Ecija as villagers keep peace

By Anselmo Roque
Inquirer Central Luzon

SAN JOSE CITY—VILLAGERS IN Nueva Ecija would be the best protectors of candidates in the coming elections as the province's governor and vice governor said livelihood programs are succeeding in weaning away residents from the influence of communist guerrillas.

Gov. Tomas Joson III said no village in the province was now willing to be under the rule or influence of the New People's Army.

"They are just afraid of the guns of the rebels," said the governor.

He said several Barangay Defense System (BDS) groups have set up their own businesses to improve their lot.

The provincial government cooperated with defense authorities in setting up the BDS in the province's villages to counter the influence of communist guerrillas and show that development could be had through peace and hard work.

Joson III said some of the BDS groups received hand tractors from the provincial government. These tractors, he said, would be lent out at minimal costs to farmers.

"I heard that they will next acquire mechanical palay threshers and maybe a rice mill," he said.

His brother, Vice Gov. Mariano Cristino "Boyet" Joson, also supported the programs.

Oscar Pascual, chair of the San Jose City Multi-purpose Cooperative Inc., said the cooperative members were assured of at least P2 million in seed money to start their economic projects.

He said P1 million came from Vice Governor Joson, and P500,000 each from Rep. Eleuterio Violago and San Jose City Mayor Alexander Belena.

Officials of the province said these projects helped bring about peace.

As a result, the military said candidates in Nueva Ecija will not worry about securing permits to campaign from communist rebels as the villagers band together to ensure peaceful elections on May 14.

"We are just in the background now," said Lt. Rodolfo Cordero Jr., executive officer of Alpha Company of the Army's 48th Infantry Battalion.

The villagers became members of the BDS units organized in different zones of the 17 barangays in Carranglan town.

The BDS members included some 500 New People's Army members and sympathizers who surrendered to the military last month.

In past elections, several candidates for elective posts secured permits to campaign from the NPA in remote barangays of Carranglan, Cordero said. He said certain officials and businessmen also gave firearms and paid taxes to the rebels.

"This will not happen anymore," he said.

Bernardo de Guzman, Carranglan municipal engineer and BDS president, said their BDS units have become stronger since their establishment last month.

Manuel Subaba, president of the San Jose City BDS Association, said the crime rate in the different barangays has gone down.

"The farmers can now leave their carabaos and farm implements in their farms with nobody attempting to get them," Subaba said.

CA rules vs Anglicans in dispute over land

BAGUIO CITY—THE COURT OF Appeals has nullified a local court ruling that acknowledged the right of Anglicans over a lot in Mt. Province where government contractors destroyed their church to make way for a gymnasium.

The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines had censured the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) when its contractors demolished the St. Peter's Mission Church in Sabangan town last year, so they could complete an open air gymnasium now standing over the site.

The gymnasium project is financed by the pork barrel of Mt. Province Rep. Victor Dominguez.

Judge James Kibiten, of the municipal circuit trial court (MCTC) in Sabangan, ruled in May 2006 that the lot belonged to the Anglicans, but government contractors proceeded to bulldoze the church on July 9, 2006 while Typhoon "Florita" raged in Luzon.

Judge Joseph Patnaan, of the Bontoc regional trial court, affirmed the lower court's decision in October and stopped the government from interfering with the Anglicans' "right to worship."

About 500 Anglicans in Sabangan continue to hear Mass inside the gymnasium, partly to express their stake over the property and to stave off attempts from the community to take over the land.

The INQUIRER learned that church officials were also raising funds to rebuild St. Peter's Mission Church there to replace the original one-story structure. The campaign had drawn pledges of support from international Protestant congregations.

The CA's 15th Division, however, found procedural lapses in Kibiten's decision, which now prevents the church from reclaiming the property. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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GMA economic team isolates self from polls

Execs say President gave go signal to stay neutral

BAGUIO CITY—MEMBERS OF the government's economic team referred to themselves as the "economic team unity" during the Baguio leg of an economic road show on Wednesday.

But Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said some of them are "former politicians" who have "reformed." He said the government's top economists have decided that it was better for the country to distance themselves from all issues arising from the elections even if their credibility depended on taking sides in the mid-term elections.

Andaya, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Trade Secretary Peter Favila, deputy governor Diwa Gunigundo of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap announced at the forum here that President Macapagal-Arroyo allowed the team to insulate itself from the political campaign.

Andaya said he and Teves were former representatives and they both understood the lengths that politicians would go to get elected, so they asked Malacañang to remove the whole economic team from the campaign arena.

This early, the team said Ms Arroyo's economic program is being attacked in the campaign, prompting the team members to explore how they can best defend it without sounding partisan.

They cited senatorial candidate John Osmeña, who has been featured in campaign advertisements that promise voters he would remove the expanded value added tax if he wins.

Workers' concerns

In all their road show events, Andaya said government workers have asked the team to update them about the retrenchment plan, a result of a government rationalization program that takes place this year.

Gunigundo said he is busy investigating the reported circulation of fake P500 bills in Northern Luzon. He said the BSP has no proof yet that the fake bills are being released as a result of the elections.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's economic team swears loyalty to the country during a recent forum in Makati City. From left—Augusto Santos, Rafael Lotilla, Rolando Andaya, Peter Favila, Amando Tetangco and Gary Teves. EDWIN BACASMAS

ELECTION spending, such as that spent on taking this blue helicopter up to hover over Baguio City during Panagbenga carrying senatorial candidate Butch Pichay's streamer, won't have any effect on the economy, according to Ms Arroyo's budget managers. VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

The team is also haunted by scandals that have not been resolved, such as the farm input subsidy mess implicating former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante, who fled the country in 2006.

Andaya said isolating the government's top economists from the campaign heat is one way of assuring the business community that "sound fiscal policies" will continue to govern the country regardless of who wins the elections.

He said the team also needed to be friends with whoever or whatever party ends up dominating Congress to free the administration from political wrangling once it pushes for vital fiscal bills.

Regulation

An ongoing BSP study indicated that elections, from the late 1980s to the 2004 elections, showed no discernible link to inflation and government spending, unlike the elections of the 1950s, the 1960s and the martial law era, Gunigundo said.

This can be explained by the 1987 Constitution and a new election law that regulates poll spending, he said.

Gunigundo said it also proves that contemporary administrations after martial law have not been spending as much as they were reputed to have done during previous election years.

Andaya said he, in fact, fears that government may end up "underspending" this election year because of the election ban on infrastructure projects.

He said 2007 is the first year when eVAT revenues are being appropriated for social services and government construction projects.

Gunigundo said the business expectation survey conducted annually indicated that businessmen anticipate an increase in gross domestic product, and a lowering of the interest rates during election years.

No borrowings

He said the only concern raised by these businessmen is how government can sustain current economic policies in spite of the elections.

Teves said the eVAT alone is a defensible government policy. He said the new operating tax system increased revenues, so government was able to stop borrowing money to keep the country running.

Andaya said eVAT collections helped increase the revenues of local agencies.

"This is the first time in my career (as the six-term chair of the House appropriations committee) to see double digit increases [in the quarterly revenues of government agencies]," he told the forum.

"I can reverse the question and ask the politicians promising the moon where they will get the money. You know the answer to that—eVAT," he said. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Baguio to stockpile on bird flu drug

BAGUIO CITY—MEMBERS OF the city council voted on Monday to stockpile on a drug, which they believe is an accredited medical deterrent to avian influenza.

The move came after a firm alerted them to the fact that the country has no supply of oseltamivir, a flu vaccine.

But they declined an offer made in January by J Reynolds Direct Sales to buy a heavily discounted brand of oseltamivir from the firm.

The council had just passed an avian flu ordinance that created a monitoring team that would act once avian flu is detected in the city.

Councilor Erdolfo Balajadia, chair of the council committee on health and environment, and Dr. Florence Reyes, city health officer, had advised the council about the necessity of securing the drug.

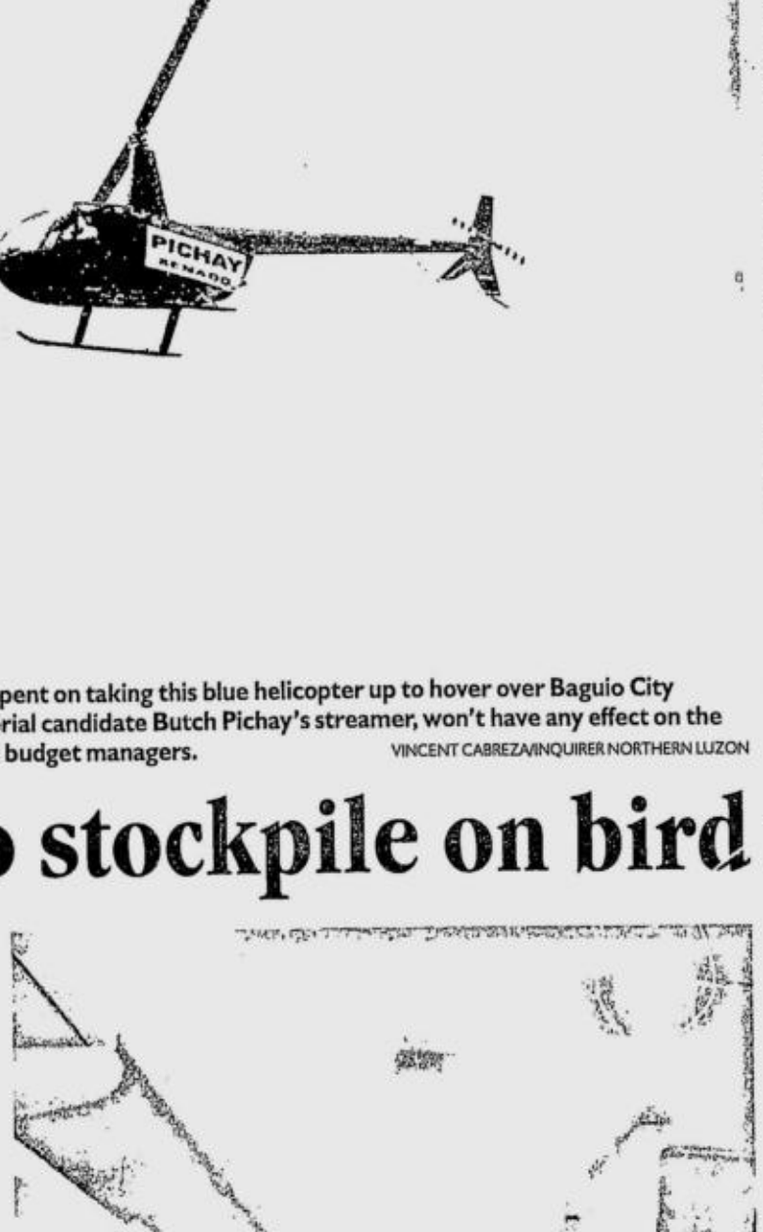
Avian influenza

Oseltamivir is described by medical websites as a neuraminidase inhibitor, which prevents cells infected by the strain of avian influenza from replicating.

Thailand and China are among the countries that manufacture the drug, which is licensed to the firm, Hoffman-LaRoche.

Recent tests in Asia confirmed the drug's effectivity, according to a report submitted to the council.

"Our research tells us that there are no available stockpiles of the [oseltamivir] in the Philippines ... Our research suggests that those who are most vulnerable [to the avian flu in the country] are the poultry growers, the agricultural livestock industry workers, games fowl breeders and handlers, and the avian flu task force members who are in the frontlines," said Marlet Magno, J Reynolds president.



AIRPORT officials inspect aircraft at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport as part of the campaign to prevent the entry of bird flu carriers. JESS YUSON

Balajadia said Magno's letter helped the council draw up plans to fix this oversight in the recently passed avian flu code.

But the council said the drug procurement would still require bidding procedures, and invited Magno to compete with other suppliers instead.

Acting Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. has not yet signed the measure, which was passed on third reading on March 5.

Task force

However, the city's 2007 budget already appropriated P11 million from the city's annual calamity fund to finance the avian flu task force operations.

Concern over bird flu is also keeping agriculture officials in Capiz preoccupied.

The Department of Agriculture there continued to monitor the province because it lies along the path of migratory birds coming from other Asian countries.

Larry Nacionales, regional agriculture officer-in-charge, said the department had sent out advisories to the provinces of Capiz and Antique to allay fears about the possibility that avian flu would infect the local poultry.

Avian flu

He said the DA regional office sent the Regional Task Force on Avian Flu, headed by Dr. Oscar Limoso, to Capiz and Antique to monitor.

The team confirmed the absence of avian flu cases in the areas, Nacionales said.

The DA stepped up its monitoring of areas in the country located along the paths of migratory birds, especially in Sorsogon, after a suspected migratory bird flu carrier was found there in early February.

Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon with a report from Felipe Celino, Inquirer Visayas

DA exec says gov't finding ways to cut losses from imports

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

TAGAYTAY CITY—THE COUNtry's vegetable industry will suffer most under a free trade system but the government will soon institute special trade measures to cushion the system's adverse impact on farmers, Agriculture Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano said here on Thursday.

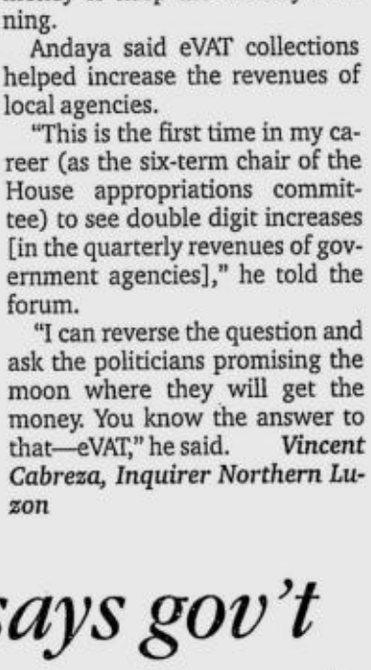
Among these measures, he said, is to ask the World Trade Organization (WTO) to allow vegetables in the country to be placed in the sensitive list that would reduce tariff even gradually.

"We have placed vegetables as the highest in the list of most sensitive products. But right now, only chickens and onions are considered sensitive," Serrano told delegates to the 5th National Vegetable Congress at the Taal Vista Hotel here.

He said developing countries have adopted the sensitive list as a special safeguard measure (SSM) in the Doha round of talks of the WTO.

The list would be an effective weapon against developed countries that want to export their vegetables to the domestic markets of developing countries under a reduced tariff scheme, he said.

"The SSM is our protection against cheap imported vegetables since these enjoy subsidies from their countries of origin," he said.



THE VEGETABLE industry becomes ingredient for the political cauldron as candidates take up the cudgels for local vegetable growers. Reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson is among them, going around the markets of Baguio City, bringing with him his opposition to continuing trade liberalization without a healthy local vegetable industry. EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Serrano said developed countries spend $1 billion a day in farm subsidies.

Other vegetables, like cabbage, lettuce and carrots, are not considered sensitive because the country has yet to come up with the rigid data required of these vegetables.

SPORTS

Red Bull grabs solo lead

JAMES PENNY SCORED 44 POINTS AND LARry Fonacier hit nine of his 23 in extra time last night as Red Bull downed another quality foe in Alaska, 124-113, at the Olivarez Gym to grab the solo lead in the PBA Fiesta Cup.

Penny came out with all guns firing, shooting 20 points right in the first quarter, and helped Red Bull steady the ship somewhat in the fourth after the Bulls lost a commanding lead before forging the extension at 108.

Fonacier scored two triples and completed a three-point play off Willie Miller as the Bulls opened up a 121-111 lead with 1:39 left to seal their third straight win and deal the Aces their first loss in three outings.

"This is a good buildup for Sunday (versus Barangay Ginebra)," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao. "We are in good position for one of our better starts because we've been beating the good teams and it gives us great confidence."

Red Bull also beat Purefoods and San Miguel Beer even with cornerstone Enrico Villanueva still not in 100-percent shape.

Red Bull's starting center scored just four points last night, but Leo Najorda and Carlo Sharma took up the slack by finishing in double digits with 19 and 11, respectively.

Alaska failed to score in the last 3:39 of regulation as it bungled a 108-104 lead. The Aces were also held to just three points in the first 2:14 of overtime before Miller scored on a drive, 111-115.

Then came Fonacier's three-point play as the former Ateneo ace was tagged while falling away for a jumper for a 118-111 Red Bull spread. He then stuck the danger in the hearts of the Aces with a cold-blooded triple, his fourth for the night, with 1:39 left for that 10-point lead.

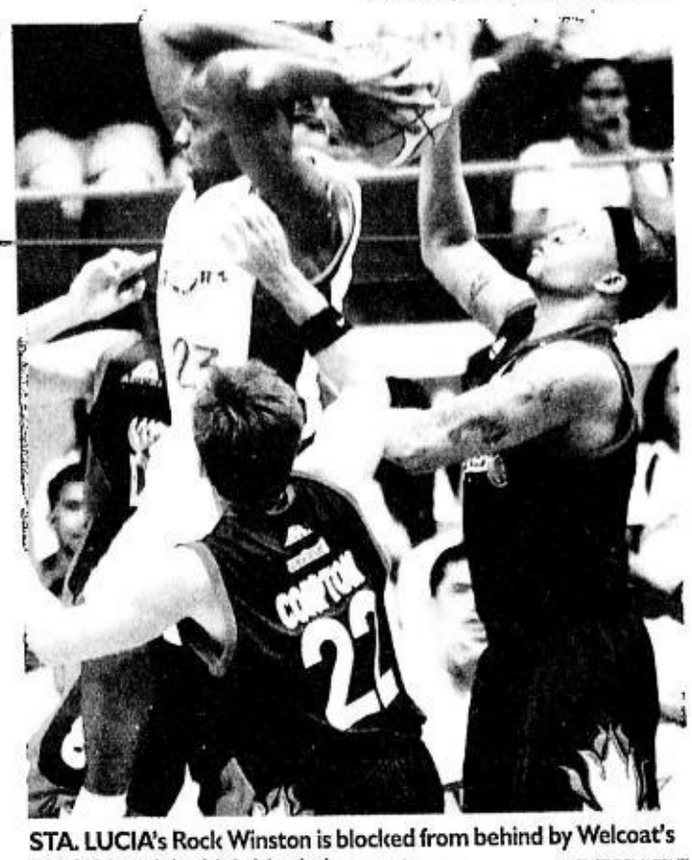
Rosell Ellis led the Aces with 27 points.

The scores:

RED BULL 124—Penny 44, Fonacier 23, Najorda 18, Sharma 11, Valenzuela 11, Membrere 6, Villanueva 4, Bagulo 3, Ybañez 2, Cruz 2, Bugia 0, Alvarez 0, Hrabak 0.

ALASKA 113—Ellis 27, Miller 24, Belasco 18, Thoss 12, Hugnatan 12, Singson 8, Caraso 7, Julnio 3, Ferriols 2, Laure 0, Bajar 0.

Quarters: 37-29, 69-59, 93-86, 108-all, 124-113



STA. LUCIA's Rock Winston is blocked from behind by Welcoat's Rob Wainwright (right) in their recent game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Sta. Lucia, Purefoods set out for ice-breaker

STA. LUCIA, THE strongest side on paper which played like a paper tiger in its first two games, is performing exactly opposite to its stint in the last tournament where the competition was even more formidable.

Despite an intact lineup, the Realtors were blown off the court in their first two games. As things stand, they will have to get their act together to avoid being put in a hole they might not be able to climb out of.

After losses to Air21 and newcomer Welcoat, the Realtors clash with the Purefoods Tender Juicy Giants, who are also deemed to be underperforming, at 4:35 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum.

And Sta. Lucia cannot ask for a better break: it faces a foe whose manpower is severely depleted.

The Tender Juicy Giants also lost their first two outings, but it was because they lacked the firepower in the stretch. The lineup missed Jun Limpot and Marc Pingris to injuries and Kerby Raymundo to the national team.

New Sta. Lucia coach Boyet Fernandez has got nothing working for the team, especially against the newcomer Welcoat Dragons. The greenhorns built leads of more than 30 points before settling for a 114-104 win.

STANDINGS	W	L
Red Bull	2	0
Air21	2	0
Alaska	2	0
Coca-Cola	2	1
Talk 'N Text	1	1
Welcoat	1	1
Ginebra	0	1
Sta. Lucia	0	2
Purefoods	0	2
San Miguel	0	2

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs. Purefoods
7:20 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs. Welcoat

Late Sports

More Sports stories on A29-A32

Welcoat seeks followup win

Welcoat, incidentally, shoots for a followup to that win later in the night when it tangles with crowd darling Barangay Ginebra in the 7:20 contest.

The Realtors set the pace in the Philippine Cup for more than halfway of the eliminations. They got off to a 3-0 start and led the field with a 9-2 slate at one point.

A crucial losing streak near the end of that elimination round put the Realtors in the wild-card phase where they almost got eliminated. It has been downhill for the team since then.

Rock Winston has shown potential to dominate games for the Realtors, whose problems, it seems, stem from the inability of its high-profile local crew to deliver a worthy backup job.

Same problem

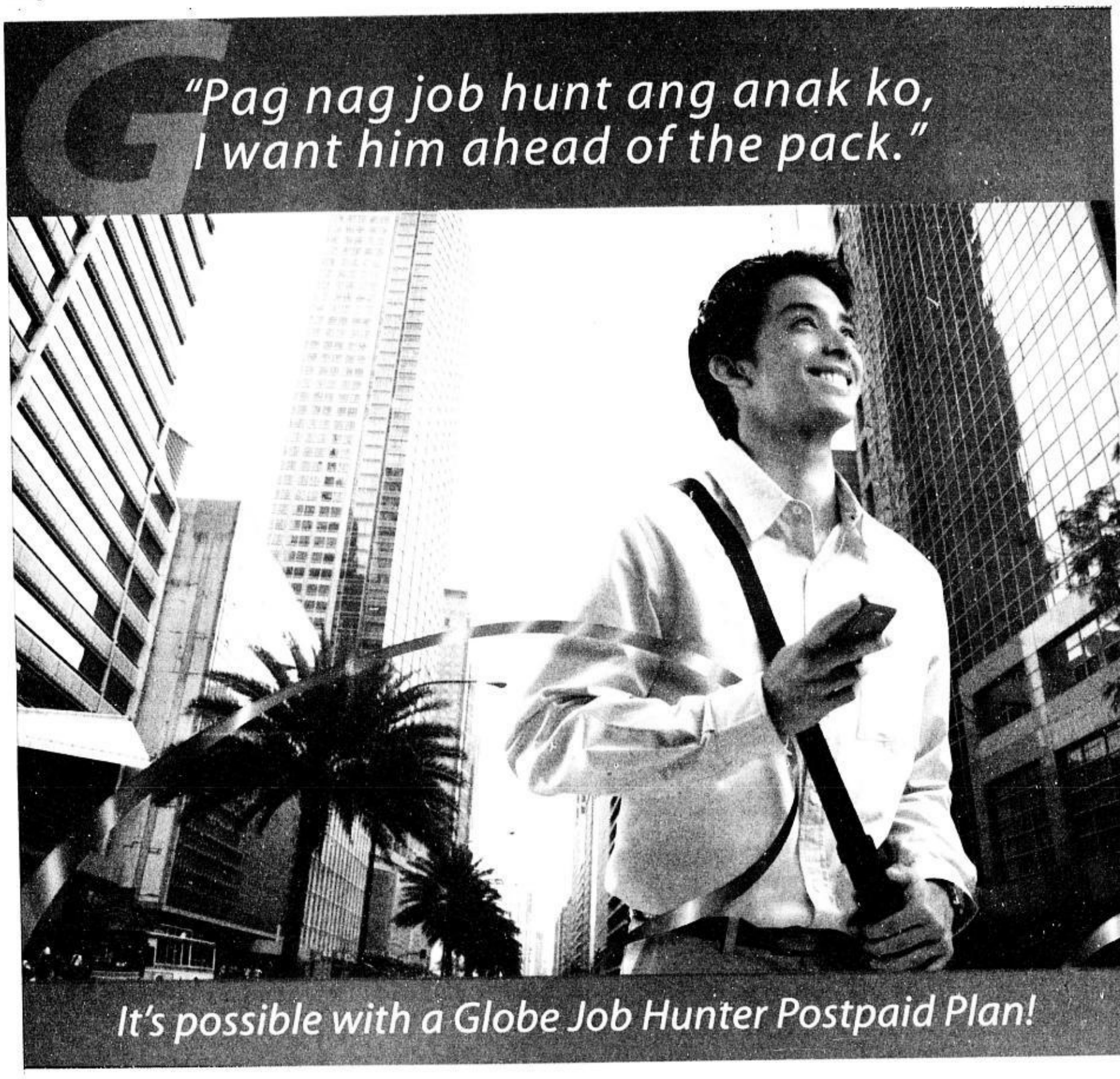
Purefoods is also encountering the same problem, as the team has sputtered in the stretch in each of its first two games with only James Yap and import Jesse King delivering.

Yap is averaging 23.5 points a game and King 28, but after them, there has been no one on the roster who has scored more than nine points in any of those losses.

Meanwhile, new San Miguel Beer import Paul McMillan has arrived and will be measured for the 6-foot-6 height limit before the Beermen's out-of-town game Saturday in Lanao Del Norte against the Coca-Cola Tigers.

The Beermen have gotten rid of Vidal Massiah, their substitute import for Kelly Whitney.

Massiah played just two games in a forgettable PBA stint, shooting 11 points in the first and none in the second. *Musong R. Castillo*



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No family feud, says slain trader's sis

Cops checking 'all angles' in heir's death

By Allison W. Lopez

"THERE IS NO FIGHT BETWEEN US."

Isabel Delgado, the eldest sister of the businessman who was killed last Saturday in Malate, denied that any member of her family was involved in the murder.

Police initially said they were looking at a property dispute as the motive in the killing of Federico "Rico" Chuidian Delgado, 51, who was stabbed dead by two unidentified men in his penthouse at the Mayflower building on Leon Guinto St.

Responding policemen found the name "Franco," later identified as the victim's older brother, written on the wall near the body.

Isabel disputed allegations that her brother Franco had masterminded the killing, saying Franco was very close to Rico, and that there was "no reason for him to do that."

"We are not fighting. We are a close-knit family and we are supporting Franco all the way," said the 66-year-old Isabel, the eldest of the six children of Francisco "Paco" Delgado, chair of the Citadel Corp.

The siblings serve as directors on the board of the company that is engaged in shipping, manning, brokerage, cargo, real estate and other businesses.

Isable said she was sad that her brother was being implicated in Rico's murder and came forward "to set the record straight."

"We're all very [financially] secure ... there's no fighting about money. We all feel shocked and bad about what happened to Rico, we love him dearly," she said.

Isabel noted that the name "Franco" which Rico had supposedly written in his own blood, was "far too high up the wall."

She said she had rushed to the crime scene after getting wind of the killing and had seen it for herself.

"I'm 5'7" and the note was above me. It was also located far from Rico's body ... I believe it was written after he died," she said.

Police investigator Virgo Villareal, however, said it was quite possible for the victim to have reached up to write the note. But he also said the police was looking at "all angles."

Rico's companion, Analiza Pesico, said

NO FAMILY/ A26

Teen stalked me–Janno

By Jeannette I. Andrade

JANNO Gibbs

INQUIRER PHOTO

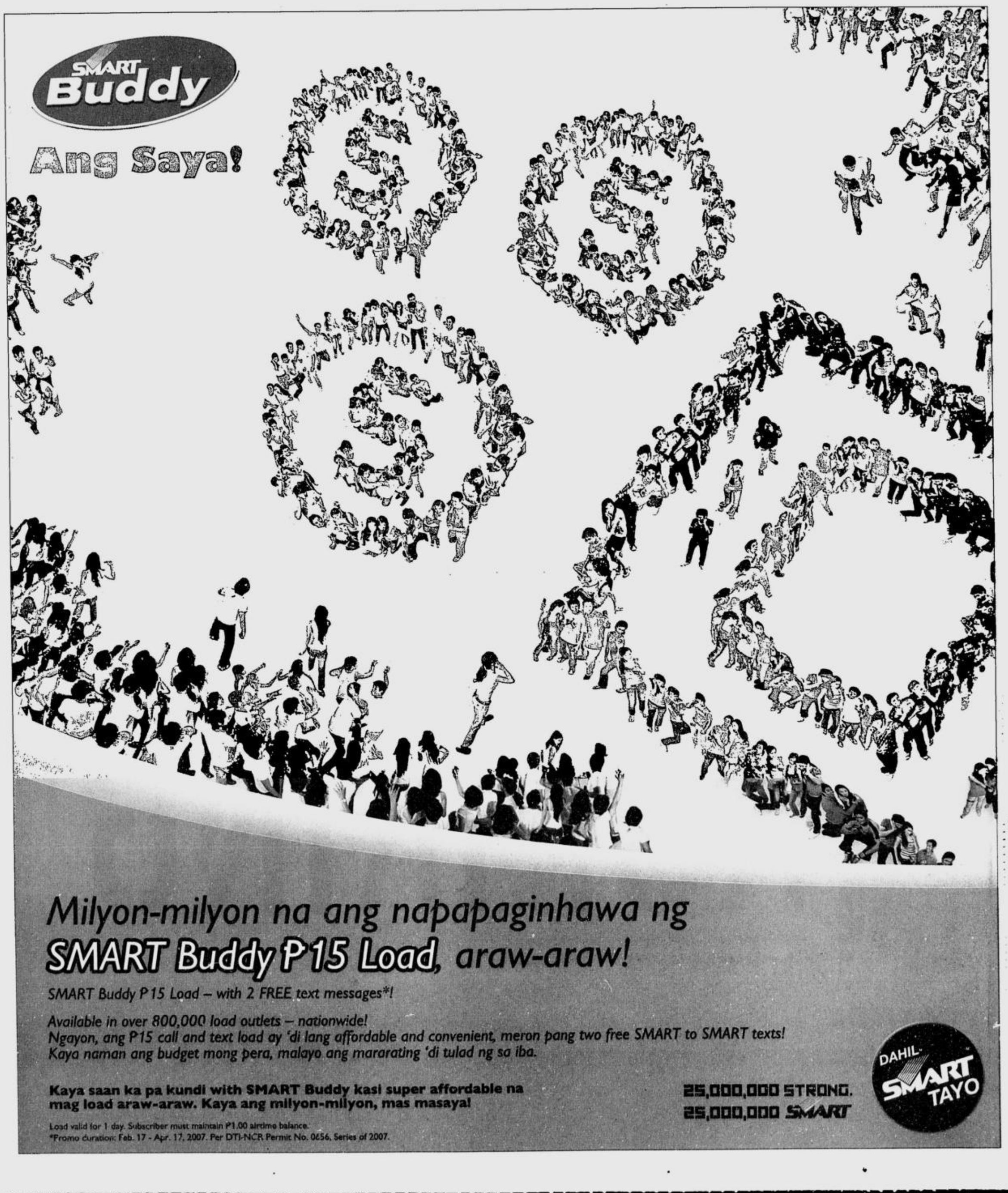
SINGER JANNO GIBBS filed a complaint yesterday against a 17-year-old girl whom he accused of stalking him and allegedly sending text messages threatening to abduct and kill members of his family.

But the alleged "stalker" had a different tale, claiming that she and the singer had been involved in a six-month relationship. She also denied she had sent Gibbs and his actress-wife Bing Loyzaga threatening text messages.

The teenager, a student in a girl's college, was taken into custody by operatives of the Quezon City Police District Police Intelligence and Operations Unit at around 2:30 a.m. yesterday, in an entrapment operation outside a fast food restaurant in Barangay Central, Quezon City.

The girl claimed Gibbs sent her a text message to meet her outside the restaurant and that he was waiting in a parked car. As soon as she boarded the vehicle, she said she saw Gibbs with several police officers who told her that she was being brought to their offices for questioning.

TEEN/ A26



Valenzuela may seek TRO on Tullahan bridge repair

By Nancy C. Carvajal

VALENZUELA CITY OFFICIALS are ready to go to court to have the rehabilitation of the Tullahan Bridge suspended for at least two months, if the rerouting scheme to be implemented today fails to take off again.

The Department of Public Works and Highways is undertaking repairs on the 73-year-old bridge that connects the cities of Manila, Malabon, Valenzuela and Bulacan province.

Closed

Contruction work is to start today and the structure has been closed to all traffic.

The DPWH denied a request from the local mayors for a 60-day reprieve.

"We will wait for the result of the dry run today before we take the next step which is to file a [temporary restraining order]," said press information officer Marither Menia.

Previous dry runs have failed, causing heavy traffic on both sides of the bridge.

Vehicles were stranded and commuters had to walk to reach their destinations.

More time

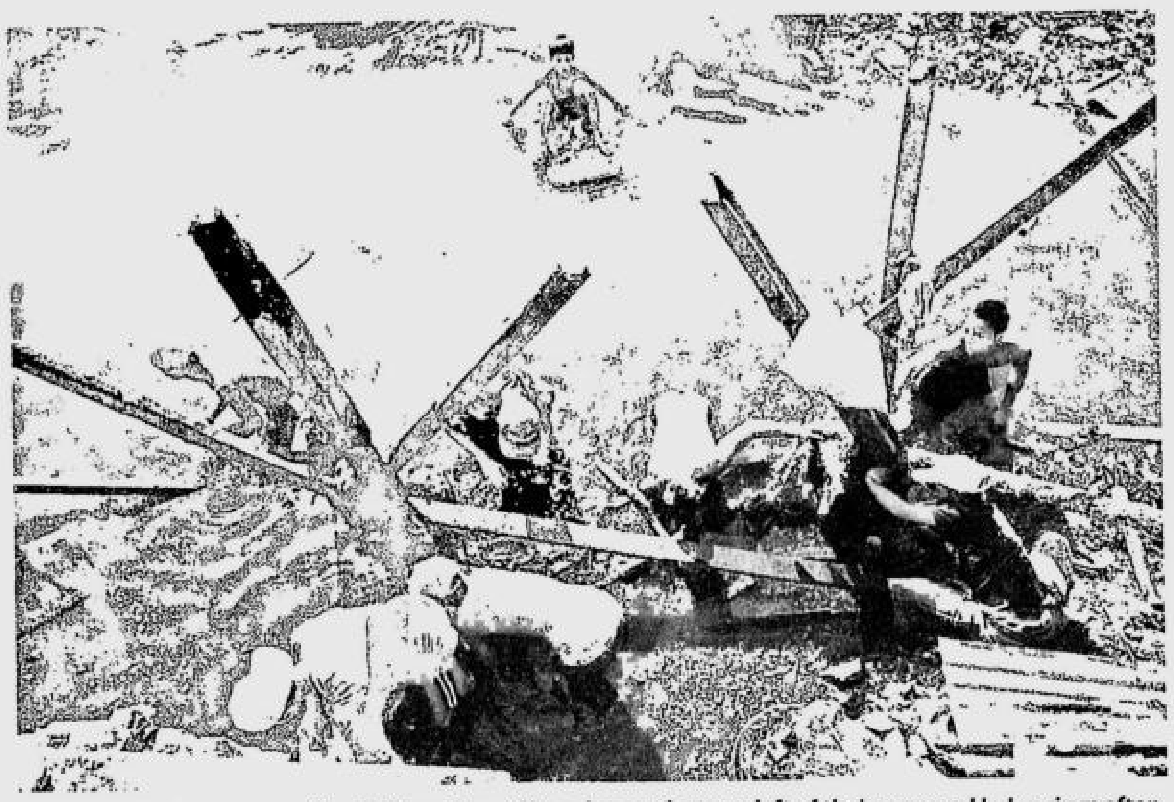
Local officials want a postponement of the repairs to give them more time to address traffic concerns arising from the bridge's closure.

They said the day-to day affairs of the local government units as well as delivery of services would be severely affected.

But the DPWH said the repairs cannot wait as the bridge's steel parts are already corroded.

According to the new rerouting scheme, all southbound public utility vehicles coming from Bulacan and Malanday will be allowed up to or near the foot of the bridge in front of the San Miguel Brewery.

Northbound vehicles will be asked to go through Victoneta Ave., as announced earlier.



RESIDENTS of a compound in Malibay, Pasay City salvage what was left of their personal belongings after a fire burned down their homes Wednesday. REM ZAMORA

Cops rule out politics in ambush

By Tina G. Santos

POLICE ARE PURSUING ROBbery or a personal grudge as possible motives in the ambush of four people, including a man alleged to be an Abra mayoral candidate, in Manila Wednesday morning.

Chief Insp. Alejandro Yanquiling Jr., chief of the Manila Police District's Homicide Division, said their initial investigation showed that the attackers' main target was not William Raymundo, who, according to one of his companions, was planning to run for mayor of Tubo, Abra in the May elections.

Belen Salespara-Carasig, chief of staff of Commissioner Romeo Brawner of the Commission on Elections, however, said Raymundo could not have made it as a mayoral bet since he was not a registered voter of the province.

"We are making the clarification because some quarters might capitalize on the incident and claim it was similar to the killing of Rep. Luis Bersamin," she told reporters yesterday.

Identified as an "area of concern," Abra was placed under the control of the Comelec, with Brawner as the commissioner in charge.

Yanquiling said the assailants apparently planned to rob Romeo Elvina who was wearing a bracelet worth P75,000.

"It appears that Romeo was their main target because one of the suspects even followed him inside the canteen's kitchen where he ran to hide," Yanquiling told the INQUIRER.

"The suspects took his bracelet then finished him off," he added.

"Based on our initial investigation, there's no political color here," he said, adding that the shooting could also be a result of a personal grudge against Romeo who was hit several times in the abdomen.

Critical condition

Yanquiling said Romeo's wife Nida said her husband remained in critical condition at the Philippine General Hospital.

The victims were eating at a roadside canteen on San Andres corner Diamante Streets when the suspects opened fire on them.

Apart from Raymundo and Romeo, Zenaida Orber was also wounded. Their two other companions, Rose Que and Nida were unhurt.

However, Ricardo Elvina, Romeo's brother, was declared dead on arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila. *With Nikko Dizon*

2 fires hit Pasay, Las Piñas

By Julie M. Aurelio

TWO FIRES RAZED RESIDENTIAL compounds in the cities of Pasay and Las Piñas yesterday, destroying 620 houses and displacing some 700 families.

A lit candle was seen as the cause of the fire that began on Wednesday and ate up some 400 shanties along Apelo St., Brgy 157 in Malibay, Pasay City.

The blaze started inside the house of Gina Fabella when a candle tipped over and started a fire. The eight-hour blaze quickly fanned through the shanties made of light materials.

Firemen had a hard time putting out the fire, which began at around 5:30 p.m. since trucks could not enter the narrow streets leading to the compound.

Southern Police District fire marshall Supt. Sofia Mendoza said the firefighters were able to contain the blaze at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday.

It was finally put out at 4:30 a.m. on Thursday, forcing the homeless families to seek refuge at the Malibay Gymnasium and the Pasay City East High School.

City Mayor Alan Panaligan immediately ordered the City Social Welfare and Development Office to provide the victims with food items and social assistance.

"Our social welfare office is now constructing a complete master list of the affected residents," Panaligan said in a statement.

At the Malibay Gymnasium, where 140 families were camped out, the city government have distributed meals and relief goods and counseled some of the distressed victims. There were no reported injuries among the victims, although a firefighter suffered an sprained ankle.

In a separate incident, 120 houses were burned to the ground in Talon 1, Las Piñas City at 12:26 a.m. yesterday.

Firefighters are still puzzled at how the fire started in the house of Joselito Rosa inside the Dela Cruz Compound in Talon 1.

But his neighbors believe Rosa, a welder, intentionally burned down his home, and, as a result, their own houses as well.

"The neighbors were fuming as they waited for the suspect to come out of his house. Then they attacked him," said PO2 Ariel Gupana. Rosa, however, denied the charge and said he was asleep when the fire began, Gupana said.

Boratong misses trial; Palao back to Pasig

By Kristine L. Alave and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

CITING HEALTH REASONS, ALleged drug lord Amin Imam Boratong failed to appear at his trial in Pasig City this week, compelling his lawyer to file a waiver for his court appearance before next week's hearing.

Lawyer Raymond Fortun said the defendant would file a waiver to dispense with his appearance in court before next Thursday.

Boratong, the alleged owner of a a Pasig City shabu market that was demolished in February 2006, is detained at the National Bureau of Investigation

Franklin Cabalin, Boratong's custodian at the NBI, said Boratong complained of shortness of breath and stomach pains.

Meanwhile, the tug-of-war for the custody Samer Palao, the main police witness against Boratong is over—for now.

The Misamis Regional Trial Court agreed to postpone the scheduled arraignment of Samer Palao yesterday morning on kidnapping and murder charges he is facing until he has completed his testimony in the cases police have filed against Boratong, said Philippine National Police Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force legal officer Roque Merdegia.

"This means our witness can continue his testimony in all the cases against Boratong," Pasig City Police chief Senior Supt. Francisco Uyami told the INQUIRER.

METROBRIEFS

Ex-cop linked to slays

A FORMER policeman was arrested yesterday morning by his colleagues in connection with the killing of two sisters in Sta. Mesa, Manila on Tuesday. Manila police officials, led by district Director Danilo Abarsoza, presented to Mayor Lito Atienza and the media yesterday the alleged gunman Paquito Co. A former senior inspector of the Philippine National Police Traffic Management Group, Co was positively identified by Oscar Palanas Jr., who said he saw the suspect gun down his girlfriend Rose Retumban and sister Lorna. Co vehemently denied involvement in the case, saying he was sleeping soundly at the time the incident occurred. The siblings were shot dead by while waiting for a ride at Pureza Street corner Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard.

Allison W. Lopez

Helen Ulanday; 84

Helen Manaois Ulanday, 84, passed away in Houston, Texas, on Feb. 26. Helen's cremated remains have been brought to the Arlington Chapel B, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, for necrological services today and March 17. Interment is scheduled on March 19. Helen was the first president of the Family Rosary Crusade at the Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Parish in Project 4, Quezon City. She served as secretary of the Family Life Workshop, Quezon City Chapter, president of the Homemakers' Club of the Philippines, and was officer of the Project 4 Development Cooperative and was a member, of the Cenacle and the Tabitha of the Light of Jesus Community.

No family feud . . . From page A25

she was beaten, hogtied and locked in a dressing room by the suspects who managed to escape.

Isabel said she had spoken to the 20-year-old woman who claimed to have been spared because Rico had begged the men "not to touch her."

"I don't personally know her [Pesico], but definitely she wasn't a 'syota' (girlfriend) as the other papers claimed," Isabel said, adding that she felt sorry for the girl who was "beaten black and blue" and who seemed not to know what it was all about.

But Villareal said the girl told him that she had begged for her life, and that the suspects said to her, "*Kilala mo ba si Franco? Pasensiya ka na napag-utusan lang kami* (Do you know Franco? We're sorry but we were ordered to do this)."

Isabel said it could be that the suspects were trying to throw the investigators off the track by pointing suspicion at Franco.

She noted that the only items taken by the suspects were items inside a vault in the apartment which was full of antiques and other valuables.

Chief Inspector Alex Yanquiling observed that the apartment was "not in disarray," indicating that the suspects knew what they were searching for.

Missing items

Police and Rico's family was still unclear about what items were missing. Isabel said Rico knew what the vault contained, but guessed they may have been "important documents."

"I think Rico knows something or they suspect he knows something ... but it cannot be his *kuya* Franco," she said.

She said Franco was in Subic when it happened, "but he rushed here upon hearing of it. He has been here since Sunday."

She described Franco as a "very happy person" who has been badly affected by the gruesome killing of their brother.

Teen stalked me . . . From page A25

In his complaint for grave threat, Gibbs claimed the teener had been harassing him and his wife for more than a month now. He denied knowing the suspect as well as her cellular phone number, even as she insisted that they had met several times allegedly for casual sex along Timog Avenue inside the singer's vehicle.

The suspect alleged that her friends, who reportedly knew about her "relationship" with the singer could have played a prank on her by sending the text messages to the complainants. The suspect's mother said they may file countercharges against Gibbs in answer to the accusation, as well as the manner by which the teenager was "hauled off" for questioning.

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UK votes to renew its nuclear arsenal

LONDON—BRITAIN'S PARLIAMENT backed Prime Minister Tony Blair's plans to renew the country's nuclear arsenal on Wednesday as opposition votes helped Blair survive a major rebellion by members of his own party.

Eighty-seven politicians from Blair's Labor Party voted against his plan to spend 15 to 20 billion pounds ($29 to 39 billion) on new nuclear-armed submarines to replace ones that go out of service in about 2024.

It was the biggest rebellion against Blair since a 2003 vote backing war in Iraq and the largest rebellion on a domestic issue in Blair's decade in power.

The revolt could have overturned Blair's 67-seat majority in the 646-member lower house of parliament, but backing from the opposition Conservatives helped Blair secure a 409-161 vote in favor of renewing the Trident nuclear weapons system.

The rebellion was a further blow to Blair's authority over the party as he prepares to step down in the next few months.

Rebel politicians pledged to keep fighting the decision, which will mean Britain keeps a nuclear deterrent into the 2050s.

"This is not the end of the story by any means," Labor legislator Jeremy Corbyn told Sky News. "This is a very big rebellion ... in favor of peace." As lawmakers voted, anti-nuclear demonstrators rallied opposite parliament, chanting "Trident, No!" and holding up banners saying "No to a new nuclear arms race." Other protests were held outside the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh and at the Faslane nuclear submarine base in Scotland.

Blair is convinced Britain must renew its nuclear weapons, saying new threats from countries like North Korea or nuclear terrorists make it unwise and dangerous to disarm. But he faced deep-rooted opposition within the Labor Party, which advocated unilateral nuclear disarmament until the late 1980s.

"We must lead the world in campaigning for the eradication of the nuclear threat and we must lead by example," said Nigel Griffiths, one of four Labor politicians who quit junior government jobs in protest at the renewal of Trident.

Opponents say Britain no longer needs weapons to deter an attack from a nuclear-armed Soviet Union, and renewing the arsenal will make it harder to persuade countries such as North Korea to abandon nuclear weapons.

They say the new system is a waste of money.

Blair said there was "absolutely no evidence" it would improve the prospects of other countries disarming if Britain gave up its nuclear weapons. "I think the reverse is the case," he told parliament.

Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said Britain will reduce its stockpile of operationally available nuclear warheads by 20 percent this year to fewer than 160.

Britain's nuclear arsenal is the smallest among the five UN Security Council permanent members who are legally recognized as nuclear states under the non-proliferation treaty.

It consists of four British-built Vanguard-class submarines that carry 16 US-supplied Trident long-range missiles, armed with British-built nuclear warheads.

Blair offered an olive branch to Labor rebels by saying parliament could vote again between 2012 and 2014 on whether to approve contracts to build the new subs. *Reuters*

GREENPEACE activists stage an anti-nuclear protest outside Britain's Parliament buildings on the banks of the River Thames, March 13, as the government announced plans to replace UK's Trident nuclear arsenal. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

'Talibanization' of northern Pakistan

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—Along the Afghan border, not far from this northwestern city, Islamic militants have used a firm foothold over the past year to train and dispatch suicide bombers against US and Nato forces in Afghanistan. But in recent weeks the suicide bombers have turned on Pakistan itself, carrying out six attacks and killing 35 people. Militant leaders have threatened to unleash scores more, in effect opening a new front in their war. Diplomats and concerned residents see the bombings as proof of a spreading "Talibanization," as Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, calls it, which has seeped into more settled districts of Pakistan from the tribal areas along the border, where the Taliban and al-Qaida have made a home. In Peshawar and other parts of North-West Frontier Province, which abuts the tribal areas, residents say English-language schools have received threats, schoolgirls have been warned to veil themselves, music is being banned and men are told not to shave their beards. Then there is the mounting toll of the suicide bombings. One of the most lethal killed 15 people in Peshawar, most of them police officers. *NYT*

Sex-religion photos spark outcry in Spain

MADRID—Two photo books featuring nude models portraying religious figures in sexual positions sparked debate Wednesday, with some questioning the use of public funds for the project. The books were published several years ago, but the right-wing Popular Party has seized on the issue with two months to go before regional and local elections in overwhelmingly Catholic Spain. Internet sites and several newspapers have reproduced some of the black-and-white photos from artist Jose Antonio "Jam" Montoya, often with the models' private parts blacked out. The photos include representations of Jesus and Mary. The art exhibit catalogues were co-financed by the socialist regional government of Estremadure in southwest Spain. That has led to strong criticism from the opposition. *AFP*

GOP senator wants attorney general fired

WASHINGTON—Sen. John Sununu of New Hampshire became the first Republican in Congress to call for Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' dismissal, hours after President George W. Bush expressed confidence in his embattled Cabinet officer. Gonzales has been fending off Democratic demands for his firing in the wake of disclosures surrounding the ousters of eight US attorneys—dismissals Democrats have characterized as a politically motivated purge. *AP*

US drug panel warns of odd effects from sleeping pills

THE MOST WIDELY PRESCRIBED sleeping pills can cause strange behavior like driving and eating while asleep, the Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday, announcing that strong new warnings will be placed on the labels of 13 drugs.

The FDA also ordered the makers of the well-known drugs Ambien and Lunesta and the producers of 11 other commonly used sleeping pills to create point-of-sale patient fliers explaining how to safely use them.

Although the FDA says that problems with the drugs are rare, reports of the unusual side effects have grown as use of sleeping pills have increased.

US sales of Ambien and Lunesta alone last year exceeded $3 billion. Use of those med ications and other similar drugs has soared by more than 60 percent in the United States since 2000, fueled by television, print and other advertising. Last year makers of sleeping pills spent more than $600 million on consumer advertising.

The FDA review was prompted, in part, by queries from The New York Times last year, after some users of the most widely prescribed drug, Ambien, complained online and to their doctors about unusual reactions ranging from fairly benign sleepwalking episodes to hallucinations, violent outbursts, nocturnal binge eating and—most troubling of all—driving while asleep.

Night eaters said they woke up to find snack wrappers in their beds, missing food, kitchen counters covered with flour from baking sprees, and even lighted stoves. Sleep-drivers reported frightening episodes in which they recalled going to bed, but woke up to find they had been arrested roadside in their underwear or nightclothes.

The FDA said it was not aware of any deaths caused by sleep driving.

The FDA also received reports of people making phone calls, purchasing items over the Internet, or having sex under the influence of sleep medication. In each case the consumers had no recollection of the events, which they said occurred after they took their pills and went to bed.

Dr. Russell Katz, the FDA's director of neurology products, said drinking alcohol before or after taking the drugs appears to increase the chances of having such a reaction. *New York Times News Service*

A test to 'sequester' carbon dioxide, perhaps curb global warming

WASHINGTON—AMERICAN Electric Power, a major electric utility, is planning the largest demonstration yet of capturing carbon dioxide from a coal-fired power plant and pumping it deep underground.

Various experts consider that approach, known as sequestration, essential to reining in climate change by preventing the gas from being added to the atmospheric blanket that promotes global warming.

The project, to be announced Thursday by American Electric Power, based in Columbus, Ohio, will use a new process—so far tested only at laboratory scale—that uses chilled ammonia to absorb the gas for collection. The process was developed by Alstom, a major manufacturer of generating equipment, and aims to reduce the amount of energy required to capture the carbon dioxide.

Some experts have estimated that nearly a third of a power plant's energy output might be needed to pull carbon dioxide from the waste stream. Alstom hopes to hold it to 15 percent.

The cost must be kept as low as possible if the technology is to be used on a wide scale. Congress is seen as unlikely to impose enormously expensive restraints on emissions. And under proposals to cap emissions nationally and let companies trade credits for extra reductions, only the cheapest methods of reducing greenhouse gases would thrive in the marketplace.

A report released Wednesday by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology called for prompt work on demonstrating the necessary sequestration technologies.

The co-chair of that study, Ernest J. Moniz, a former assistant secretary of energy, said the unusually large scale of the American Electric project made it "quite relevant."

Climate policy specialists said the project was a significant test of the technology and also a sign that American Electric, which relies on coal for fuel, is expecting carbon emission limits of some kind.

The initial trial, at the company's Mountaineer plant in New Haven, W.Va., will take a portion of the carbon dioxide from the flue, compress it into liquid form at more than 1,000 pounds of pressure per square inch, and inject it 9,000 feet below the earth's surface, a technique that experts say is not well understood but would be essential to large-scale carbon sequestration.

The project will begin next year, the company said. A demonstration 6 to 12 times that size, which would be commercial scale, will be conducted soon after at a plant in Oklahoma. *New York Times News Service*

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Tentative deal on Iran sanctions reached

IRANIAN women visiting a war museum in the city of Khorramshahr, March 14 to remember those who died in the Iran-Iraq war. REUTERS

UNITED NATIONS—AMBASSADORS FROM SIX major powers reached a tentative deal on imposing sanctions on Iran that they hope to introduce to the 15-nation UN Security Council on Thursday, providing their governments agree.

The text, obtained by Reuters, includes a ban on Iranian arms exports, an assets freeze on individuals and firms involved in Tehran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs and a call to nations and institutions to bar new grants or loans.

The measure, which may be adopted next week, would penalize Tehran for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment, which can be used in nuclear bombs or for peaceful ends.

"We have an agreement in principle based on some additional changes that were introduced and presented today by some delegations," Alexander Wolff, a US ambassador, said late on Wednesday. "So it's new elements and understandings that need confirmation from capitals." British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry, who would introduce the draft, told reporters, "The text needs to be cleaned up and put to capitals for their final consideration overnight and our expectation is that (Thursday) we will be able to put it in." The new measures follow a resolution adopted in December that imposed trade sanctions on Iran's sensitive nuclear materials and technology, and froze the assets of some Iranian individuals and companies. Iran, which insists its nuclear program is for peaceful uses only, ignored a Feb. 21 deadline to suspend enrichment or face further action.

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said the text of the new draft resolution "by and large" had been agreed on, adding, "We're pleased with the outcome." China's UN ambassador, Wang Guangya, did not give the draft a ringing endorsement, objecting to the long list of people and companies liable for financial sanctions, such as firms owned by Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corp. and the state-owned Bank Sepah.

"With the list I am not happy, but one has to reach agreement so there has to be a package," Wang said.

He said intelligence given in compiling the list could be incorrect, "so that's why we have to be careful."

On the arms embargo, the text says Iran is banned from exporting any conventional weapons. But the measure calls on states to "exercise vigilance and restraint" in shipping any heavy weapons to Tehran.

The draft does not have a mandatory travel ban on individuals on the list but orders nations to notify a Security Council panel if the targeted officials enter their territories.

The measure would suspend all the sanctions if Iran complies with the council's demands within 60 days. If Tehran does not, further action would be considered.

So far, Tehran has shown no sign of relenting.

"If you think ... you can make the Iranian nation surrender, you are wrong," Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, told a rally in central Iran on Wednesday.

Ahmadinejad is considering coming to New York to address the Security Council when the resolution is adopted. *Reuters*

US looks set to take action against Sudan

WASHINGTON—AFTER MONTHS of false starts and empty threats, the United States finally looks poised to take firm action against Sudan to halt the atrocities in Darfur.

Experts and human rights activists who have long been critical of US inactivity on Darfur said improved US-China cooperation in dealing with global crises coupled with growing impatience over Sudan's defiance may have created the diplomatic critical mass needed for the crackdown on Khartoum.

The State Department signaled its readiness to act Wednesday by announcing that it would seek a new UN Security Council resolution aimed at forcing the Sudanese government to honor past promises to allow a UN-led peacekeeping force into Darfur.

"It is simply the case that the Sudanese government needs to recognize that the international community can't stand idly by while people suffer," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said.

"We are indeed looking at other options, including options that might require further UN action," she said.

President George W. Bush's special envoy for Darfur, Andrew Natsios, meanwhile told several human rights groups in a conference call Wednesday that the administration was preparing its own "Plan B" package of economic sanctions against Sudan, according to a participant in the call.

The announcements came after Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir wrote to UN Secretary General Ban Ki moon last week backing away from a deal reached in November to let a 20,000-strong, UN-led peacekeeping force into Darfur.

The letter was just the latest step in a four-year campaign by Beshir to prevent international intervention in Darfur, where more than 200,000 people have died and at least two million been left homeless in a civil war in which government-backed militia have been blamed for most of the violence. *AFP*

PASSERS-BY are reflected in a puddle near a cathedral in Peter and Paul fortress in St. Petersburg, March 14. AFP

Putin offers to help Vatican heal conflict with Russian Orthodox

BARI, ITALY—RUSSIAN PRESident Vladimir Putin pledged on Wednesday to help heal the conflict between the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches, saying Christian values were needed to keep Europe together.

Putin held his first meeting with Pope Benedict on Tuesday amid signs that top Orthodox clerics, which suspected his predecessor, John Paul II, of trying to spread Catholicism in Russia, saw the German-born Pontiff in a more positive light.

"Part of the conversation was about human values and about cooperation between the Holy See and our Church," Putin, a former KGB spy who is said to be a believer, told a news conference at the end of an Italian-Russian summit.

Putin's predecessors, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, invited the late pope to visit Russia, but opposition from ageing Patriarch Alexiy II prevented him from going.

At a meeting with Pope Benedict, Putin did not formally renew the invitation, dashing hopes of a meeting between the Pontiff and Patriarch soon in Moscow.

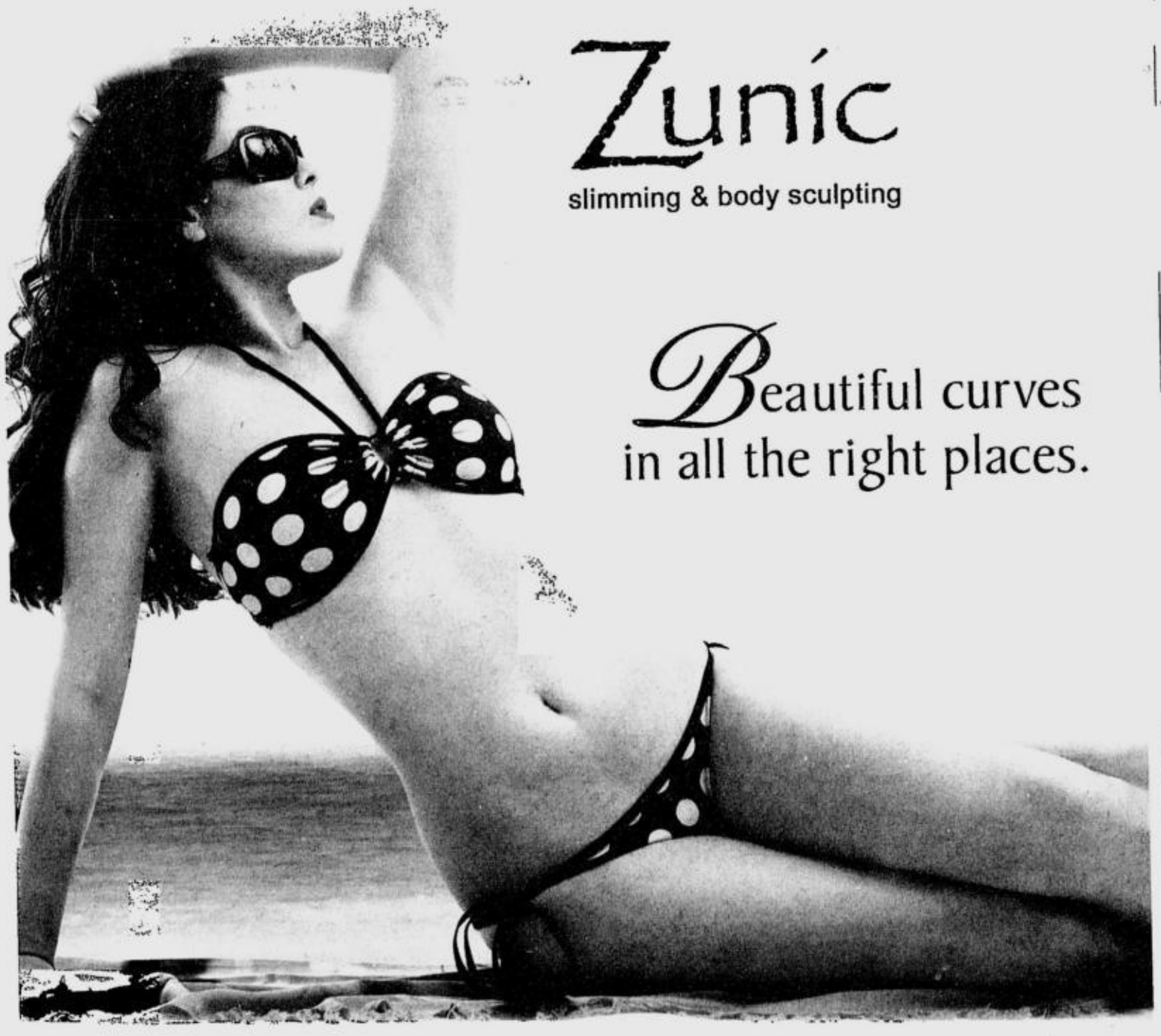
"Benedict XVI is keen to improve relations, but it takes time to sort out problems created in the past years," Itar-Tass news agency quoted deputy head of the Patriarchate's foreign relations department, Bishop Mark, as saying.

Putin made clear he will not act as a middleman in arranging a meeting but promised to help bring them together.

"Our Church is separate from the state but we know the Patriarch is keen to develop good ties between the two Churches and we will contribute to this good cause," Putin said.

The Kremlin leader, who prepares to step down next year after presiding over eight years of strong economic growth, said he is keen to leave to his successor a strong, self-confident and respected Russia.

Critics accuse Putin, who finds himself at odds with the West on many important issues like Iran, Iraq and the Middle East, of seeking to erect a new "iron curtain" between Russia and the rest of Europe. *Reuters*



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'Pacman-Solis not worth the risk'

MANNY PACQUIAO, ALONE, IS WORTH THE risk. But he may not be worth the gamble if paired with Jorge Solis.

At least that is the perception among boxing enthusiasts after broadcast conglomerate ABS-CBN reportedly rejected the $800,000 (P39 million) Pacquiao was reportedly asking in exchange for exclusive rights to air his pay-per-view fight against the unbeaten Solis on April 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

PACQUIAO

Two of the major concerns, a ring analyst told the INQUIRER, are whether Solis packs enough power to trade punches with Pacquiao for 12 full rounds and whether the Mexican has the drawing power of a boxing star.

Solar Sports and network giant GMA-7, however, found the offer enticing enough to pool their resources and cover the fight for a reported sum of more than P60 million.

Insiders at Solar Sports said the deal includes theater, cable and other ancillary rights in the Philippines.

Although it is said to be a done deal, the final figures and details remain a mystery. Solar Sports and GMA-7 officials deferred the final announcement, which was originally set for yesterday afternoon.

An industry insider said that based on projections, Solar Sports and GMA need to generate at least P100 million in gross revenues to turn in a profit for the Pacquiao-Solis tiff, which is reportedly enjoying brisk ticket and PPV sales in the United States.

This ballpark figure could be realized if the fight lasts the distance or reaches the later stages, another boxing expert who asked to remain anonymous said.

The main risk is if Solis—for all his sterling credential of 32 wins with 23 knockouts and two draws—turns out to be not as good as advertised and is knocked out in the early rounds.

ABS-CBN once dangled $400,000 to air the Pacquiao-Oscar Larios showdown at the Araneta Coliseum last year. The Lopez-owned network hit the jackpot when the bout went the full route of 12 rounds.

ABS-CBN executive Peter Musngi said: *"Wala na tayong magagawa. Malamang hindi nagkaayusan* (We can no longer do anything. More likely, negotiations fell through."

The network, according to the same boxing expert, cannot be faulted for taking a back seat this time for the Pacquiao fight. Its top honchos are just being careful with their card, he said. *Roy Luarca*

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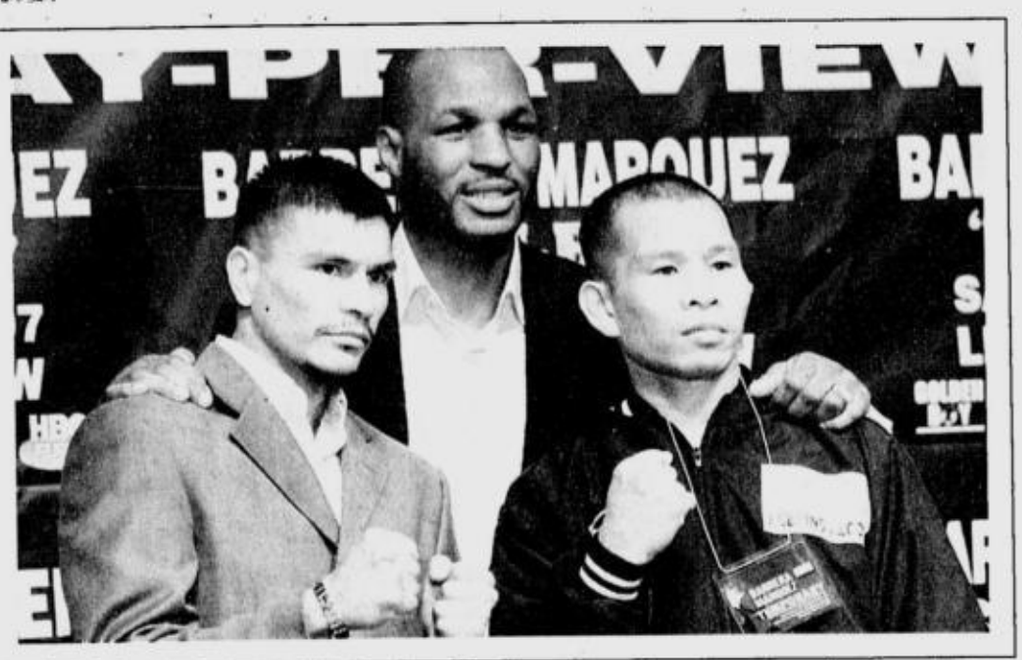


COMBATANTS Filipino Gerry Peñalosa (right) strikes a pose with World Boxing Organization (WBO) super bantamweight champ Daniel Ponce De Leon (left) of Mexico as they are presented by promoter Bernard Hopkins at a news conference in Las Vegas. Peñalosa and De Leon clash in a title fight on Saturday. AP

We're clean, and NCAA can check documents, says PCU

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WE HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE.

That's the stand of Philippine Christian University amid allegations the school violated eligibility rules of the National College Athletic Association, particularly in basketball, so it could field stronger teams.

Fred Olano, the school's representative to the NCAA management committee, said they stand by the documents they presented to the league.

"It's all there, they can check all the documents we presented to them," Olano told the INQUIRER.

Olano said the institution is not conducting any investigation on the matter because as far as it is concerned, "they are all just allegations."

He said PCU will only dignify the allegations if it replies formally to them.

NCAA Mancom chair Henry Atayde of St. Benilde also brushed off reports about PCU's alleged manipulations, but he said that he will conduct his own personal inquiry.

Atayde said the reports stemmed from anonymous text messages sent to members of the Mancom.

Olano said he did not receive any of those text messages.

Search on for PBL's finest 12 for Seaba Champs Cup

By Jasmine W. Payo

AMATEUR STARS TURN INTO A CROP OF hopefuls as they vie for slots in the PBL selection that will compete in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) Champions Cup next month in Jakarta.

The core of back-to-back champion Harbour Centre leads the 24 PBL standouts invited to join the tryouts starting today at the RFM Gym in Mandaluyong City.

"We'll get 12 players," said Junel Baculi, the Harbour Centre consultant and coach of the country's first regional stint in two years.

"We still have tryouts on Saturday and Sunday, and by that time we would have finalized our line up."

The PBL selection will represent the country in its bid for a first regional title since Fiba (international basketball federation) lifted the Philippines' suspension on Feb. 21 from international competitions.

"In our own little way, we hope we can help recapture the country's lost glory in basketball and I'm confident that Baculi can form a competitive team," said PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad. "That's why we're sending our best players. I hope this will set everything in motion."

The PBL adjusted its tournament calendar to make way for the Jakarta tournament, set April 9 to 13. The season-ending Unity Cup conference will fire off on April 14.

Toyota Balintawak coach Louie Alas, Harbour Centre mentor Jorge Gallent and Henkel Sista coach Caloy Garcia will be assisting Baculi.

Players from Harbour Centre, the 2006 Unity Cup and 2007 Silver Cup titleholder, are expected to make up the core of the selection with JC Intal, Silver Cup Finals Most Valuable Player Chico Lanete, Jonathan Fernandez and Chad Alonzo among those tapped to join the tryouts.

Silver Cup MVP Jason Castro, Jojo Duncil and Beau Belga—Harbour's three new recruits—were also invited.

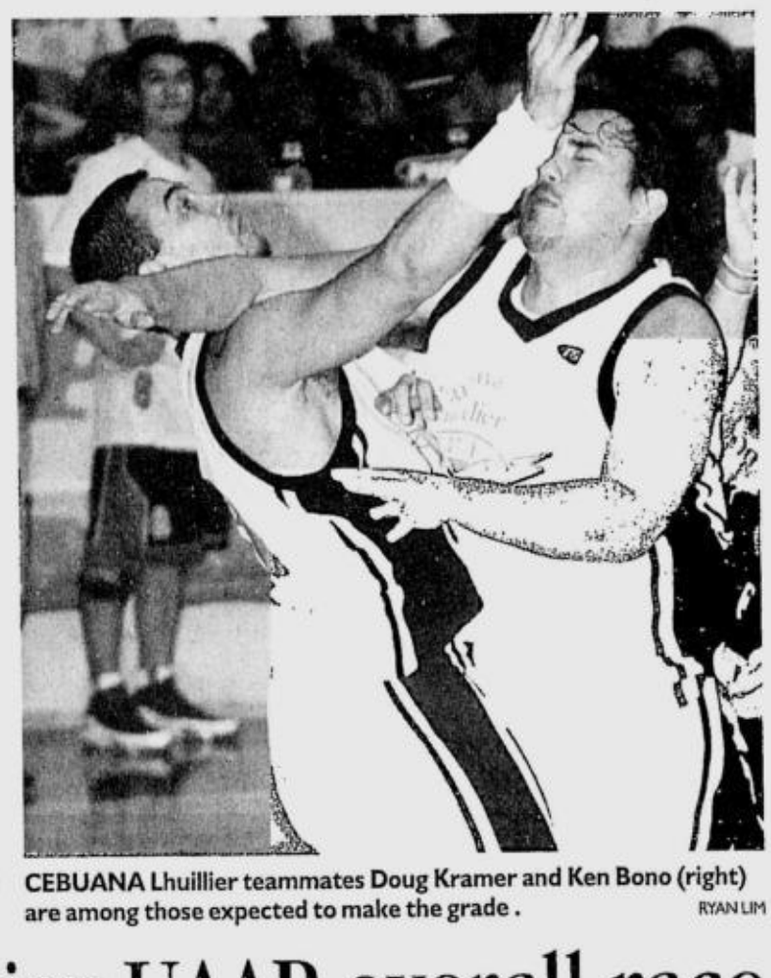
Other top cagers summoned were UAAP MVP Ken Bono and Doug Kramer of Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala; Toyota Balintawak's Marvin Cruz, Patrick Cabahug and Erick Rodriguez; Hapee's Reed Juntilla, Larry Rodriguez and Robert Sanz; Henkel Sista's Samigue Eman; and Mail and More's JR Quiñahan and Ronjay Buenafe.

Nigerian slotman Sam Ekwe, the 2006 NCAA MVP and Rookie of the Year, leads several Magnolia prospects including Yousif Aljamal, Bonbon Custodio, Jeff Chan, Al Magpayo and Jonas Villanueva.

Harbour Centre CEO Mikee Romero is bankrolling the PBL selection.

"This is one small step in reclaiming our status as one of Asia's best teams in the sport," noted Romero.

The Jakarta meet is the qualifier for the Fiba-Asia Champions Cup that will be held in Iran this September.



CEBUANA Lhuillier teammates Doug Kramer and Ken Bono (right) are among those expected to make the grade . RYAN LIM

Kiamco tops Blaze 10 Ball Tour in US

KIAMCO

FILIPINO WARREN Kiamco continued to stamp his mark in the United States, topping the recent Blaze 10 Ball Tour at the Edison Billiards Hall in Edison, New Jersey.

It was the former three-time Southeast Asian Games gold medalist's third title in his ongoing foray in the US pool circuit.

Kiamco had earlier won both the 9-ball and 8-ball divisions of the US Bar Table Championships in Reno, Nevada, making him just the second player to sweep the tournament. American Cliff Joyner first achieved the feat in 2004.

The 36-year-old Kiamco from Pasil, Cebu, scored 23 points to top the six-player finals of the tournament.

He edged compatriot and Doha Asian Games 9-ball gold medalist Antonio "Gaga" Gabica by a solitary point.

The participants were divided into groups of six playing in round-robin format. Kiamco, along with Matt Krah and Carl Yusuf advanced from Group 1, while Gabica, Ignacio Chavez and Joe Frady qualified from Group 2.

Frady beat Chavez in playoff match—after both came up with 21 points—to take third place, while Krah finished fifth, ahead of Yusuf.

It was Kiamco's third tournament since embarking on month-long trip to the US . He also finished third in the Turning Stone Classic in Verona, New York, late February.

He has now amassed a total of $20,100 (about P1 million), vaulting to seventh-place in this year's money list.

Kiamco will play two more tournaments before returning to the country in time for the Second Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) National Championship. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Santo Tomas also rules junior UAAP overall race

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS capped the 69th UAAP season with a double victory.

Just days after capturing the overall championship in the seniors division, the Tigers also bagged the overall junior crown with a 105-point total built around their title runs in athletics, taekwondo and table tennis.

UST, along with other top season performers in team and individual sports, will be honored in the UAAP Annual Awards on March 25 at the University East Theater in Manila.

UE finished just two-points shy with 103 points, making it one of the tightest races for the overall sports award in high school.

The Tigers also got some lift from their runner-up finish in volleyball, and third-place spots in the boys and girls' swimming and chess.

UE swept the volleyball events and also clinched the title in chess. It settled for runner-up honors in swimming and table tennis.

In the seniors division, UST dominated 11 of 26 sports events to rule with 331 points. University of the Philippines came in at a distant second with 254 points.

Ateneo rounded up the top three in the overall junior standing with 80 points after capturing the championship in boys' basketball and swimming, and second-place honors in athletics and taekwondo.

UP, ruling in girls' swimming, settled for fourth overall with 77 points. Adamson collected 32 points, followed by Far Eastern University with 28 and National University with 12. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Fresh faces bolster RP volley teams

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FRESH FACES WILL REINFORCE PHILIPPINE beach volleyball and men's and women's indoor volleyball teams to the coming Southeast Asian Games in Thailand, according to Philippine Volleyball Federation president Pete Mendoza yesterday.

Mendoza said the PVF board will finalize the lineup on Sunday when they convene to tackle various issues like the SEA Games participation.

Mendoza said they will go through the list of aspirants who were scouted from the UAAP, NCAA and other leagues.

Only those who are 19 years old or below and with a height of 6-foot or above for men, and 5-foot-9 ½ inches for women will be considered.

"Hopefully we can come up with new faces with one or two holdovers," said Mendoza.

The PVF chief also reported that several Fil-Americans wish to play for the country in beach volleyball in the Thailand SEAG in December.

"They are now practicing in the United States and there could be new players joining," said Mendoza.

OVERALL CHAMP: Baguio sports coordinator Gaudencio Gonzales lifts the trophy the city won for emerging as overall champion of the recent Philippine Olympic Festival-Northern Luzon qualifying competition in Vigan, Ilocos Sur. Pangasinan and La Union placed second and third, respectively. With Gonzales were POC chair and POF execom head Robert Aventajado (fifth from left) and (from left) Ronilo Palma, technical coordinator of the Ilocos Sur organizing committee; provincial board member Jeremias Singson and Vice Gov. Deogracias Savellano.

Pagunsan, Que join Bintan golf

BINTAN, INDONESIA—TALENTED FILipinos Juvic Pagunsan, who was last year's Rookie of the Year, and Angelo Que are among those seeking glory in the inaugural Motorola International Bintan tournament next week

Singaporean number one Mardan Mamat is also among the cast of champions who will descend on the holiday isle for the $350,000 Asian Tour event at the Ria Bintan Golf Club.

No fewer than 23 winners from the Asian Tour will compete, including former number ones, Thaworn Wiratchant of Thailand and Chinese Taipei's Lin Keng-chi, event promoter Global Premier Sports announced today.

Other stars teeing up in the Gary Player-designed Ria Bintan course are Malaysia's Airil Rizman, winner of this season's Pakistan Open, India's Amandeep Johl and Simon Hurd of England, ranked 10th on the UBS Order of Merit.

P. Princesa almost ready to hold Asian moto

PREPARATIONS ARE ABOUT 90 percent complete as Puerto Princesa City gets ready for the 2007 Motocross Masters of Asia FIM-UAM Asian Motocross Championships slated March 24-25 at the motocross track adjacent to City Hall.

Mayor Edward Hagedorn, Vice Mayor Lucilo Bayron and city administrator Agustin Rocamora said renovations on the race track are in their final stages and will be ready for practice by next week.

"The race course design is more technically challenging than the one we had last year," said Arthur Valdez, vice president of the governing National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association.

The Asian regional promoter of event Xtreme Worx Philippines has been closely coordinating with the Puerto Princesa city government to ensure the success of the country's biggest annual motorsports spectacle.

SPORTSWATCH

DLSU-Canlubang, MCU Coach E venues

TWO NEW COACH E BASKETBALL SCHOOL VENUES TREAT KIDS AND teenagers to personalized, progressive and scientific basketball training this summer. Coach E Basketball School founder Eric Altamirano yesterday said De La Salle Canlubang (April 10) and Manila Central University (April 11 and May 9) are the latest schools to join as satellite venues. "We're happy that more students have a chance to enroll and learn about our kind of training that produced fundamentally sound players," said Altamirano, who said classes are also offered in Batangas City and Lipa City (April 9) along with San Beda College-Alabang, The Zone in Makati (April 10) and Xavier School (April 9). Call 631-1195 or 09217562639 during office hours from Mondays to Fridays.

Fatman derby slates 120 fights today

WITH MORE THAN 120 QUALITY FIGHTS SCHEDULED, THE CHAMPIonship round of fatman and Mikko 6-cock derby starts at 1 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit. Twenty-seven participants with two points each lead the 4-cock battle. A total of 131 entries were registered in this annual summer cockfest being hosted by Pepito Ngo. Pit manager Eric dela Rosa said today's qualifiers may win bonus prizes totaling P300,000 through the "straight four" combo. In a related development, eliminations in the NFGB National Bullstag Derby will be staged at Pasay Cockpit tomorrow. Bullstags previously banded for the 2006 National Bakbakan will be accommodated in today's weigh-in of entries, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Call 843-1890; 843-1746 and 816- 6750 for information.

King of the Ring dangles P2 million

ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT PRESENTS THE KING OF THE RING 5- COCK derby on April 12, 14, 16 and 18, with P2 million in guaranteed prize at stake. The initial batch of 50 registrants as of yesterday includes the 12 co-champions in the Largahan derby last month: Dado Mitra, Allan Siaco, Juan Jordana, Moling Dorado, Rey Ninobla, Regie Nunag, Edito Rodriguez, Boy Adiong, Mark de Leon, Monching Guiang, Boy Lorenzana and Boy Marcelino, who got the Toyota Avanza for being the fastest win champion. Hosted by Rolly Ligon, the derby has an entry fee of P6,600. Meanwhile, Roligon's Smalltime Battle of Champions 3-cock derby, with P500,000 guaranteed prize at stake, starts tomorrow. Call 851-2275; 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Jona, Shirley or Tiling).

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Speed Terror (7), Air D'Truth (1), Showgirl (6), Snake Mi Spaghetti (5)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Royal Fleet (5), Money Matters (4), Rapid Fire (4), Rough Red (5)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Letshaveaparty (3), Hurry Prince (1), Sovereign Dancer (7), Detective Daryll (5)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Kalmia (7), On The Fairway (2), See More Queen/Odyssey Blue (3), Alexis Magic (4)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Angel Sky (5), King Aljhun (4), Dona Gelay (1), Interceptor (3)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Joint Account (1), Playmaker (4), Yukozuna (8), Whilly Nilly (6), Bachelor of Arts (7)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—PutYour Foot Down (6), Grey Angel (5), Batang Westside (4), Snowdipped (2)
Race 8—(Pmpta/Qrt/Tri)—Playing Cool (4), Blue Iris (6), Noor (8), mandalay Bay (1), Guts (3), Real Material (2)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Ger Francis (11), Sambat (4), Man Power (3), Rivandel (1), Legendary (9), Soaring High (6)

Phil accuses NBA of 'witch hunt' vs Kobe

LOS ANGELES—LOS ANGELES COACH Phil Jackson has charged the National Basketball Association with directing a "witch hunt" against Lakers sueprstar Kobe Bryant.

Jackson's remarks, reported in the Los Angeles Times on Wednesday, came after Bryant was disciplined by the league for the third time in six weeks for striking an opposing player on the court.

Bryant was handed two one-game suspensions for hitting players in the face while in the act of shooting—the first time on January 28 against San Antonio's Manu Ginobili and again last week against Marko Jaric of Minnesota.

He was also assessed a flagrant foul after elbowing Philadelphia's Kyle Korver in the jaw while dribbling up the court on Friday.

"It shouldn't even have been a flagrant I," Jackson said of that foul. "That's crazy. That's a vendetta. They have a witch hunt going on. It's nuts. It's just becoming a witch hunt now."

Both Ginobili and Jaric have said they believed Bryant struck them unintentionally while shooting. In the incident involving Ginobili, no foul was called by game officials.

Nor was the flagrant foul in the 76ers game called on the court. Instead league officials assessed the penalty several days later based on video of the incident.

"It is an after the fact type of thing, and that is bothersome," Jackson said.

Jackson's comments could find him in hot water himself with the NBA, which takes a dim view of criticism of officials.

Jackson was fined $25,000 earlier this season for criticizing officiating. *AFP*

BRYANT: Two suspensions REUTERS

Woods gets 9th straight McCormack golf award

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—TIGER Woods is the recipient of the 2006 Mark H. McCormack Award after dominating last year's world rankings, Official World Golf Ranking's governing board said on Wednesday.

American Woods, who is seeking a fifth title in this week's Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill, has claimed the honor nine times in a row since 1998.

The award is presented annually to the player who holds the No. 1 position in the world rankings for the greatest number of weeks in each calendar year.

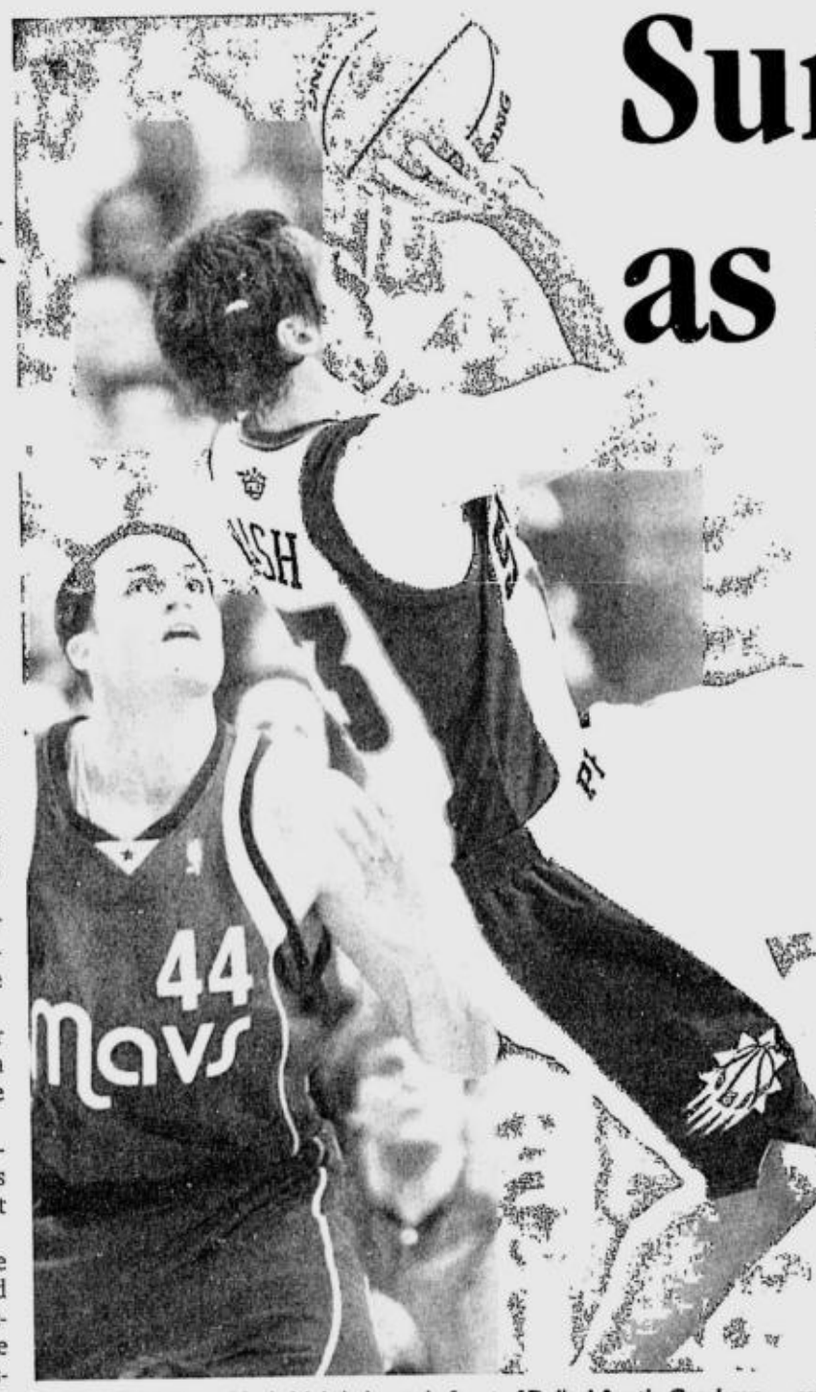
"Tiger provided us with another exciting year of watching him battle to be the best," PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem said in a statement.

"We congratulate him on another great season and on the accomplishment of continuing to dominate as the top-ranked player in the world."

Woods, whose haul of eight PGA Tour titles in 2006 included the British Open and the PGA Championship, was the game's leading player last year.

The 12-times major winner has occupied top spot for a total of 434 weeks since becoming world No. 1 for the first time on June 15, 1997.

The award was established by the governing board of the Official World Golf Ranking to honor the late Mark McCormack for the significant role he played in creating a world ranking system for professional golf. *Reuters*



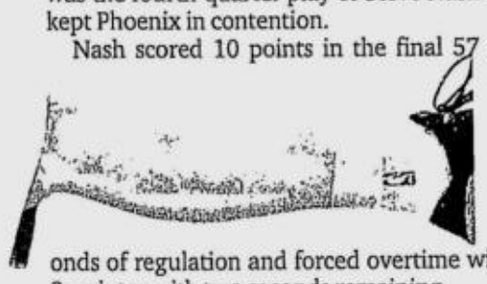
PHOENIX'S Steve Nash (right) shoots in front of Dallas' Austin Croshere. REUTERS

Suns shade Mavs as Nash sparkles

NEW YORK—THE PHOENIX SUNS ROARED FROM BEHIND TO DEFEAT THE DALLAS Mavericks, 129-127, in double overtime on Wednesday, putting an end to the Mavs' 23-game home winning streak.

Amare Stoudemire scored 41 points and pulled down 10 rebounds for the Suns, but it was the fourth-quarter play of Steve Nash that kept Phoenix in contention.

Nash scored 10 points in the final 57 seconds of regulation and forced overtime with a 3-pointer with two seconds remaining.



He finished with 32 points and 16 assists as Phoenix won its sixth straight and moved within 2½ games of Dallas for the Western Conference lead.

Jerry Stackhouse led Dallas with 33 points. Dirk Nowitzki had 30 points and 16 rebounds but missed a potential game-tying shot at the buzzer.

Jason Terry, whose three-pointer sent the game into a second overtime, added 27 for the Mavericks.

Phoenix was down 16 points early in the fourth quarter and trailed 108-101 when Nash went on his scoring streak.

With LeBron James returning from a back injury, the Cleveland Cavaliers won their seventh straight game, a 118-96 road victory over the Memphis Grizzlies.

James, who sat out Tuesday's home win over Sacramento but travelled as scheduled with the team to Memphis, showed no ill effects as Cleveland pulled away with a 47-15 run from the 7:09 mark in the second quarter until the end of the third. The run put the Cavaliers up 97-63.

James scored 13 straight points in just over two minutes in the third quarter, including three straight 3-pointers.

The Orlando Magic snapped a three-game losing streak with a 101-90 home win over the Utah Jazz.

Yao Ming knocked away a pass in the closing seconds and the Houston Rockets nipped the Los Angeles Clippers, 109-105.

T.J. Ford had 18 assists and as many points as Atlantic Division-leaders Toronto defeated the visiting New York Knicks, 104-94, for their fourth consecutive victory.

Kirk Hinrich's jumper with 26 seconds left led the Chicago Bulls to their fourth straight victory, an 88-87 road win over the Philadelphia 76ers.

The Washington Wizards beat the Indiana Pacers their 11th straight loss, 112-96. *Reuters*

NBA on TV today
10:30 a.m.—LA Lakers vs Denver
(replays 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)

Finish line's just the start of a new race for Michele

By Francis Ochoa

MICHELE BUMGARNER CAN SENSE A finish line when she is near one, even before she turns the final curb.

It's a skill she was born with long before she even decided that racing was going to be her life. She was a budding tennis star as a child, a constant topnotcher in age-group competitions despite splitting time on the court and the karting track. But she knew then her tennis was going to end.

Even if her coach at the Manila Southwoods club, Manny Tecson, was busy cooking up plans for her to hit the international circuit.

"It came suddenly," she said of rounding the final bend in her tennis career. "My dad (Lee) talked to me one day and said, 'Look, Michele, we can't do both sports at the same time anymore. It's impossible. You have to pick one.'"

And just like that, Michele crossed the finish line, as far as tennis was concerned. She did so even without, well, taking a glance at the rearview mirror.

"I have never even picked up a tennis racket since the day I decided to focus on racing," she told the INQUIRER in an interview.

That was Wednesday afternoon, a day before she announced she was leaving for the United States to hook up with S&L Racing, which will take her under its wing to further hone her skills.

Grandest of dreams

Bumgarner, Asia's karting princess with the disarming smile, is leaving because she senses another finish line coming, one which the 17-year-old speed demon hopes will help her fulfill her grandest of dreams.

She is leaving even if she could have really settled for the competition here and in the Asian Formula Three circuit. After all, the pretty offspring of an American father and his Zambaleña wife, Monina, has already made a name for herself. And she has a lot of fond memories here.

"I remember my first stint in the AF3, I tested the Monday of the racing weekend," she said. "And I still went on to win against the likes of JP Tuason and Gaby dela Merced. I was forced to the pit during that race and I won from the pit lane so that has to be my most memorable race ever."

Not to mention that she is a karting champ whose name is synonymous to the sport locally. So good, in fact, that she even got an invite to Europe, where karting "was crazy. It was like a world championship every weekend out there."

Still, she decided to move on.

"I'm kind of upset I'm not going to Europe and do kart races but I have to go to the US to concentrate on cars," she said.

All that for one dream: "I want to become the first Filipino to race F1."

Chasing dreams

And Bumgarner is big on chasing dreams.

"I always believe that when you have the heart and the passion for something, you should give it your all," she said. "Several times, I always wanted to quit. But I kept telling myself that this is what I want to do. This is what I was born to do. My life is on the track."

Thus, for someone who, ironically, has not driven on Philippine streets—she just got her driver's license and hates the traffic anyway—Bumgarner deals with "the ups and downs that go with [racing]."

In a male-dominated sport, it was not easy for Bumgarner to gain respect at the onset.

"It was hard in the beginning," she said. "Guys push and shove a lot on the track. Guys talk a lot of smack. But now, I don't get bothered when I'm surrounded by guys.

"I love beating guys. I like that they think I'm going to be a pushover. I like that when I beat them, they have a lot of respect for me after the race. It's like before the race, they say 'girl' and after I do well, they come to me and shake my hand.

Biggest crybaby

"I also used to cry a lot at the start," said Bumgarner. "If I couldn't get on the track, I'd cry. If I lost, I'd cry. I was the biggest crybaby out there.

"One day, I lost an AF3 race that would have allowed me to finish second on my championship circuit. I didn't know why, but I just cried so hard it seemed as if somebody had died.

"Then I realized I was on national television and I was like, 'Oh my God, 30,000 people are watching me and I'm crying hard.' I never cried since then."

She just kept looking forward since then. And she's willing to surrender all she has achieved here for a shot at her dream.

"There's always that hesitation when you go after something new," said Bumgarner, recalling how hard it was shifting to cars from karts because she did not know a thing about shifting gears and stepping on clutches. "I get really scared, I get really nervous."

But every time Michele Bumgarner senses a finish line, she just steels herself for what's ahead. Especially since what's ahead is a possible stint in the 2008 Champ Car Atlantic Series.

Besides, a finish line for Bumgarner is really nothing but a prelude to a new race.

PRINCESS' FAREWELL: Michele Bumgarner INQUIRER PHOTO/ JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

San Mig senior golf series fires off today at Eastridge

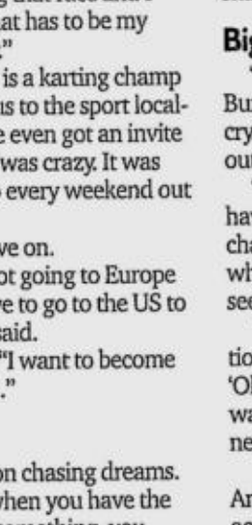
THE FEDERATION OF PHILIPPINE Amateur Senior Golfers Inc.'s 2007 San Mig Coffee Sugar Free series comes off the wraps today at the Eastridge Golf Club course in Binangonan, Rizal.

Tee off time is from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Some 150 players are taking part in the 18-hole event, initial stop of the series which also be held in other courses.

The players will be classified according to age in the individual competition—Group A (55-59), Group B (60-64), Group C (65-69), Group D (74-70) and Group E (75 and above).

Federation president Ducky Paredes thanked the Eastridge Golf Club and its senior golf association for hosting the tourney.



PEÑA: 14th on grid

Peña 14th on grid for Aussie race

MELBOURNE—DADO PEÑA MADE UP for a disastrous morning practice with an impressive qualifying performance Thursday that put him in 14th spot for the first race of the Formula Three support event for the Melbourne Formula One Grand Prix at Albert Park here.

The day started fine for the 19-year-old Asian F3 star until the front left suspension of his Dallara F304 got clipped by Daniel Schulz of Cera Sport on a tight turn in the first practice session.

That mishap cost the only Filipino in the 31-driver field three crucial laps but he made up for it in the battle for pole position by clocking one minute and 56.75 seconds, two seconds faster than his fastest lap in the morning around the 5.303-kilometer street-based circuit.

More important, it put him in a good position to challenge the leaders for the first race of the event being held as support races to the season opener of the 2007 Formula One season.

"It was good. We are just learning the track and it shows we are getting better," said Peña. "Step by step, we'll get faster."

Australian Karl Reindler took the pole with a time of 1:53.4. Austria's Walter Grubmuller, who saw action last year in the AF3, will start alongside Reindler in the front row after clocking 1:53.54.

Charlie Hollings clocked 1:53.73 and will start in the second row alongside 2006 AF3 champ James Winslow (1:53.88), winner of a race here last year.

SPORTS

Creditors urged not to seek SEAG Fed's help

By June Navarro

CREDITORS SEEKING TO COLLECT FROM THE PHILIPPINE SOUTHEast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) will put the country in a bad light if they seek the help of the SEA Games Federation.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco made this statement yesterday in the light of reports the creditors are planning to lodge a complaint with the SEAG body in order to collect about P170 million, which they said the Philsoc owes them.

The amount, they claimed, represented the cost of services the Philsoc used in holding the December 2005 Games in the country.

Cojuangco, however, said the P170 million was incorrect and that the actual figure could only be about P15 million since most of the arrears have already been paid for by the Philippine Sports Commission.

"It will be unpatriotic on their (creditors) part if they decide to involve the SEA Games Federation on this," said Cojuangco.

"They could put the entire country to shame if they do that."

Cojuangco was the Philsoc's chief operating officer.

The creditors are claiming that the P170 million was covered by the P960 million Philsoc budget, the cost of the operations of the 10-day SEAG, which was held in Metro Manila and four other major cities in the country.

The SEAG Federation will convene in May in Bangkok to finalize the organization of the 2007 Thailand SEA Games.

"The PSC will pay them," said Cojuangco during the POC program on dzSR Sports Radio yesterday. "We'll talk to the PSC to remind them about (the P15 million)."

Cojuangco said he will talk with PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez today to identify the creditors which the PSC should entertain first.

Ramirez said the creditors should produce the pertinent documents and comply with the PSC's requirements before any arrears payment could be made.

"Most of the creditors haven't fully complied with the requirements," said Cojuangco.

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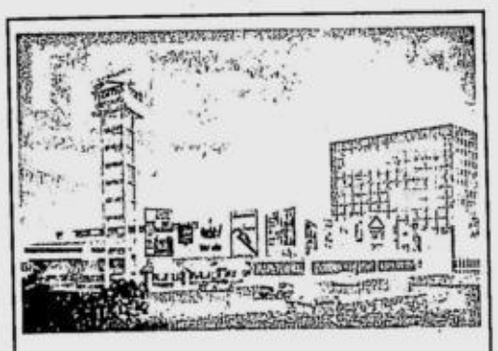

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From the same group that introduced the Ortigas and Westgate Alabang Home Depot, the Home Depot Group launches its Manila Bay Home Depot. This is the sixth home depot among the growing chain of home centers that also includes - Cebu Home and Builders in Cebu City, Mactan Home and Builders in Mactan, Cebu and recently, the Baliuag Home Depot located in Baliuag, Bulacan.

The opening of the Manila Bay branch is aimed at servicing homeowners living in the Manila Bay and coastal areas making it more easily accessible to their home interior and construction needs. Located along Macapagal Blvd. corner Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. extension, it is built on a sprawling one hectare lot right across the World Trade Center in Pasay City.

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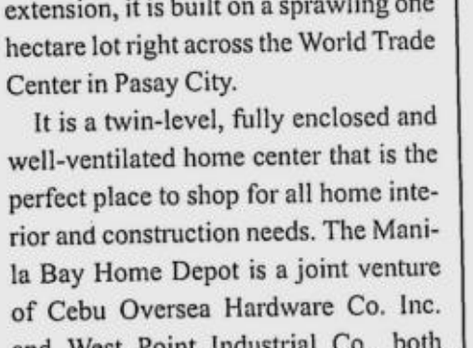
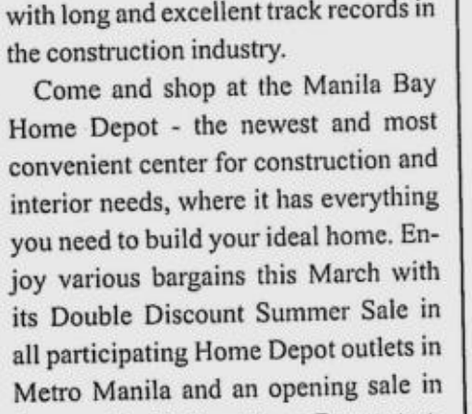
Come and shop at the Manila Bay Home Depot - the newest and most convenient center for construction and interior needs, where it has everything you need to build your ideal home. Enjoy various bargains this March with its Double Discount Summer Sale in all participating Home Depot outlets in Metro Manila and an opening sale in the new Manila Bay Home Depot starting March 14.

The Manila Bay Home Depot - is open daily from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.





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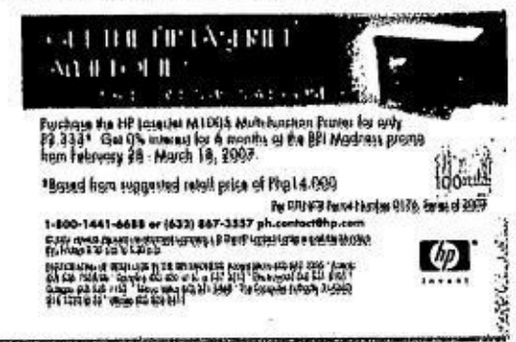


Toyota to invest ₱5.6B in RP

Fund to be used to expand Laguna transmission plant

By Daxim L. Lucas

TOYOTA AUTOPARTS PHILIPPINES Inc. (TAP), the Philippine parts manufacturer of global carmaker Toyota Motor Corp. (TMC), will infuse additional investments for the expansion of its production and exports of manual transmission units at the Toyota Special Economic Zone in Laguna.

TAP, the global production and supply hub for manual transmissions for TMC's IMV Project, will build a new structure on the plant site and additionally invest up to P5.6 billion for its production of the Model R Transmission.

With this, its annual production capacity of manual transmissions will increase from the current 150,000 units to 330,000 units by the end of 2008.

TAP currently produces constant velocity joints and the Model G manual transmissions. In 2006, it produced 180,000 G-type transmissions, of which 95 percent were exported to eight countries including Japan, Thailand,

TOYOTA/ B4

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo appears pleased to hear of Toyota Motor's plan to expand its facilities here. On her right is Toyota senior managing director Akira Okabe.

Remittances from OFWs up 20% in January

By Doris C. Dumlao

MONEY SENT HOME BY OVERSEAS FILIPINOS through the banking system surged by 20 percent to $1.1 billion in January over a year ago, despite lower deployment of new workers during the period, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

It was the ninth consecutive month that inflows from overseas Filipino workers exceeded the $1-billion mark.

In a statement, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the OFW inflows remained substantial. The 7.1-percent drop in fresh overseas deployment for the month—a little over 96,000 workers as opposed to the hirings during the same period last year—was offset by the higher income levels of new hires.

Based on preliminary data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, bulk of the newly deployed Filipinos were skilled and professional workers who found jobs in higher-paid industries such as medical, healthcare, information technology, food and hotel service, and performing arts.

New offshore jobs for land-based and sea-based workers contracted by 3.4 percent and 21.1 percent to 79,408 and 16,951, respectively.

"Going forward, the deployment of skilled Filipino workers is expected to increase as these workers train for employment in high-end jobs ... to supply manpower requirements of host countries, particularly the Middle East, Europe, North America, and Asia," Tetangco said.

Most of the OFW remittances in January came from the US, Canada, Italy, United Arab Emirates, Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

Tetangco said the strong remittance flows at the start of 2007 could also be traced to the more aggressive marketing efforts of banks and money transfer operators to provide overseas workers

REMITTANCES/ B4

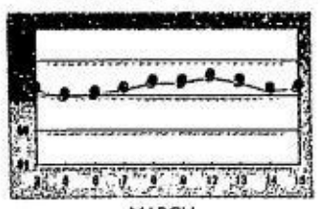
IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Net 'hot money'** inflow up 58% /B2

■ **Gov't to tap** $1.6B in ODA funds /B7

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



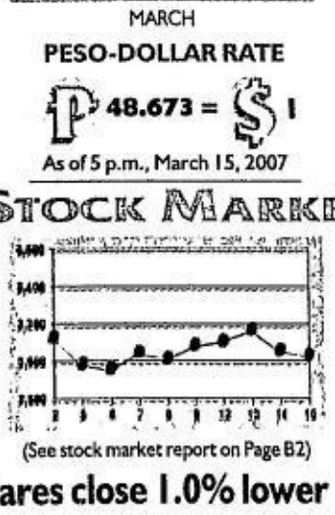
MARCH

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱48.673 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 15, 2007

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 1.0% lower

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 1.00 percent lower, extending losses in cautious trade as investors failed to be convinced by the overnight rebound on Wall Street, dealers said.

Investors unloaded blue chips, including Philippine Long Distance Telephone to buy into smaller capitalized stocks, they said.

The composite index fell 30.67 points to

SHARES/ B4

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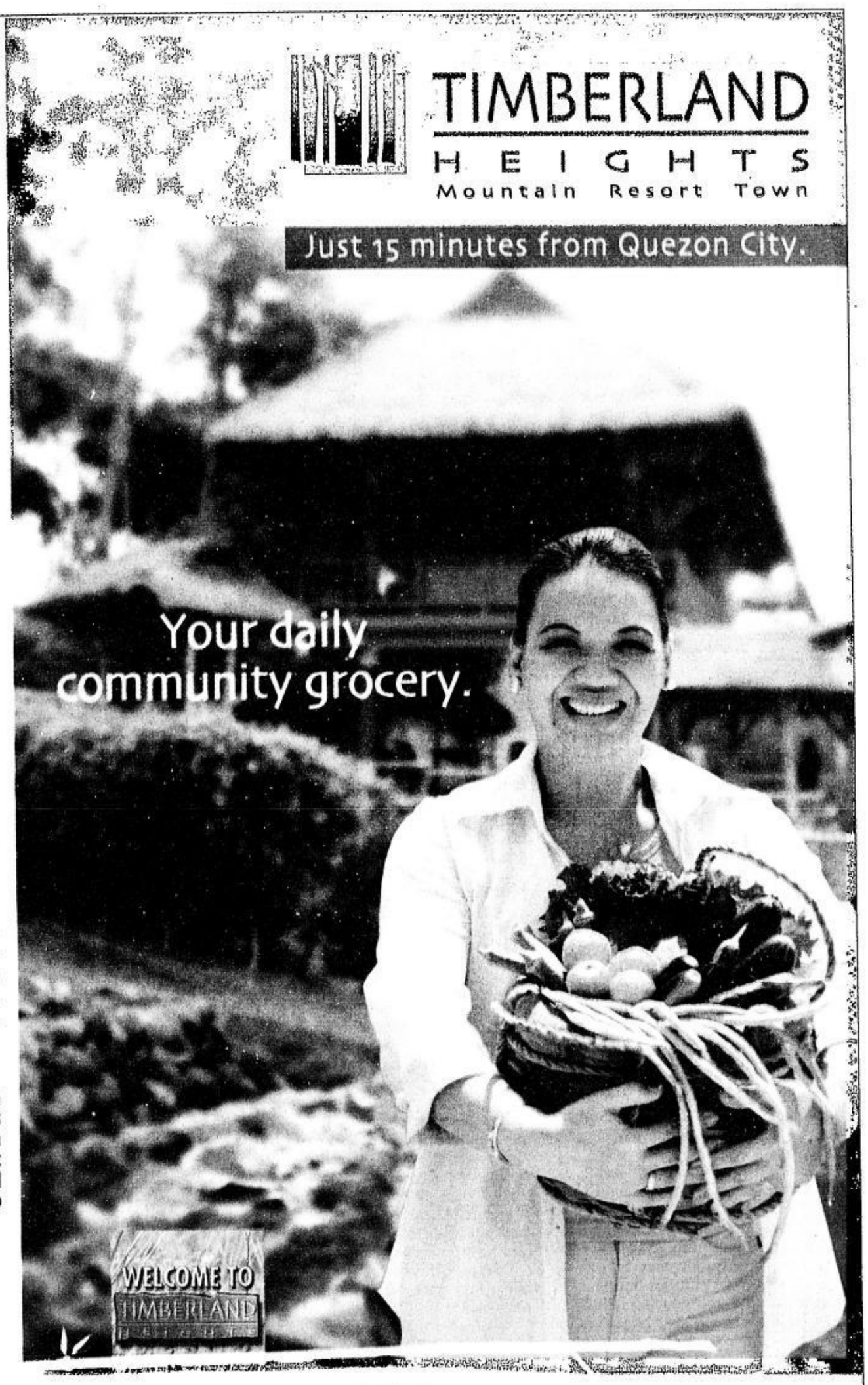

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Net 'hot money' inflow up 58%

Investor confidence up due to forex lib, GDP growth and low budget gap

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY POSTED $665 MILLION IN net foreign portfolio or 'hot money' inflows in the first two months of the year, 58 percent higher than year-ago level, due to the resurgence of global investor confidence in Asian emerging markets.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said that for February, alone, net foreign portfolio investments amounted to $412.4 million, reflecting a 63-percent growth from January's $252.52 million.

"Among the factors which contributed to this growth were the approval by the BSP of initial reforms in the foreign exchange regulatory framework, the positive economic reports on the 5.4 percent gross domestic product growth, the lower-than-target budget deficit in 2006, the further slowdown of the inflation rate to 3.9 percent in January and the continued strengthening of the peso," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Recently, the BSP approved fresh measures to liberalize restrictions on capital outflows, in stark contrast to Thailand's earlier move to curb the influx of foreign money.

Yesterday, the peso firmed up at 48.73 from Wednesday's 48.75 against the US dollar as the panic caused by the global selldown on equities subsided.

"The approval by both houses of Congress of the budget bill for 2007, the higher investment rating for the country by the financial adviser of the California Public Employees' Retirement System or CalPERs—biggest pension fund in the US—plus the strong 2006 corporate earnings of several companies also boosted general investor sentiment during the month," he said.

Gross inflows of registered foreign portfolio investments in February amounted to $1.25 billion, of which $1.1 billion or 88 percent consisted of shares listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange, mainly in property and holding firms.

Government securities, primarily Fixed Rate Treasury Notes or FXTNs accounted for $56.68 million (5 percent), while placements in money market instruments and peso bank deposits made up the remaining $90.18 million (7 percent).

For the two-month period, gross investment inflows, which rose by 118 percent from the year-ago level, consisted mainly of PSE-listed shares worth $1.833 billion (81 percent of total). The bulk of the amount went to holding firms and companies in property, telecommunication, utility and banking sectors.

Investments in peso-denominated government securities, mostly FXTNs, in the amount of $337.13 million accounted for 15 percent, while the rest went to money market instruments and peso bank deposits.

"These investments were funded with fresh inward remittances of foreign exchange converted into pesos through banks operating in the Philippines, 67 percent ($1.522 billion) of which originated from the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore," Tetangco said.

Foreign investments in PSE-listed shares and government securities were both more than double their corresponding levels in 2006 reflecting sustained investor confidence, Tetangco said.

Move to unify PSE trading floors gets boost

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE LONG-DELAYED PLAN TO UNIFY the Philippine Stock Exchange's (PSE) two trading floors in a single location got a boost after its board of directors approved the bourse's transfer to Bonifacio Global City.

According to the exchange, its board had authorized the PSE management to enter into a memorandum of understanding with Ayala Land Inc. and Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC) "in connection with the joint development of an office building" in the Taguig City enclave.

The board's approval gives fresh impetus to the plan first hatched in the late 1990s, but was put on the back burner after the 1997 East Asian financial crisis.

The PSE said its proposed contribution to the project was "the full market value of the lot owned by Crescent West Development Corp., whose shares of stock are being donated to the PSE over several tranches.

The unification plan was also hobbled by disagreements among board members of the PSE, who divide themselves along lines of the former Makati Stock Exchange and the Manila Stock Exchange.

Former members of the Makati Stock Exchange occupy the Ayala Tower One trading floor along Ayala Ave. while former Manila Stock Exchange members use the Tektite trading floor in Ortigas Center.

Most stockbrokers believe that unifying the two trading floors will be the main catalyst for healing the traditional divide between these groups.

PSE president Francis Lim said he aimed at having a unified exchange up and running in the Global City by 2010.

In the meantime, the PSE, which is holding its annual election on April 21, named the nominees for its board. These were: Jose Vitug, Cornelio Peralta, Jose Luis Javier, Francis Lim, William Ang, Robert Coyiuto Jr., Eddie Gobing, Harry Liu, Joseph Roxas, Alejandro Yu, Vivian Yuchengco, David Chua, Ignacio Gimenez, Eusebio Tanco, Anabelle Chua, Amor Ilizcupidez, Omelita Tiangco, Roberto Atendido, Samie Lim and Paul Joseph Garcia.

BSP interest rate policy seen sowing confusion

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS left interest rates steady last week, hoping to usher in market stability.

It didn't exactly work out that way.

The move—and a subsequent comment from BSP Governor Amando Tetangco that current low domestic interest rates were unsustainable—raised doubts about the credibility of monetary policy and caused confusion in debt markets over the near-term direction of rates.

The headline overnight policy rate—at which the central bank takes funds from the market—is 7.5 percent while the benchmark three-month treasury bill rate, which banks use to price loans, was 2.935 percent at last week's auction, just above a recent record low of 2.885 percent.

Not reflective

"Secondary market yields have fallen so low. So if you ask where the policy rate is, it's not reflected by the headline rate," said Edward Lee, a fixed income analyst at Standard Chartered in Singapore. "It's no longer the headline rate."

A tiering scheme introduced in November, in which the central bank pays less for larger amounts of funds parked with it by banks, is complicating the situation.

Banks have been cautious about lending because of past bad-loan problems, so the scheme was aimed at coaxing them to lend more and help fuel growth in the consumption-led economy. It effectively eased the policy rate by 150 to 200 basis points to about 6 percent, depending on the volume of deposits.

But most banks suspect the central bank may not keep the tiering scheme for long, leading to tentative loan prices.

"It's the self-defeating strategy of tiering," said Frederic Neumann, Asia Pacific economist at HSBC in Hong Kong.

"You know that tiering will disappear at some point, and when tiering disappears, interest rates would go up, and therefore why would you lend if you know interest rates would go up again?"

The Philippines kept the scheme for 15 months when it last used the strategy in 2002, although the formula has been tweaked to reflect easier rates in-between.

Won't work

But the strategy failed to boost lending in 2002, said Barclays Capital macro strategist Nicholas Bibby in a recent note, raising doubts that the scheme would work this time.

Total weekly placements in the central bank's overnight facility averaged about P170 billion last year.

TETANGCO

But the average in January to February, after the tiering scheme was introduced in November, rose to about P270 billion, which hardly suggests a rush to lend to customers.

Money continues to slosh around the banking system.

Growth in narrow money, or cash in circulation, in January was around 23 percent.

Strong export receipts, higher portfolio and foreign direct inflows and rapidly rising remittances from Filipino workers abroad are partly responsible.

These have pushed up the balance of payments surplus and boosted the peso, which rose 8.4 percent against the dollar last year.

That has added to the problem: Intervention in the currency market by the central bank to sell the dollar and hold the local currency down has simply added to the pesos in circulation.

Easing

The central bank has said there was some scope for monetary easing, with inflation pressures abating.

But the window for easing monetary policy is narrowing, with inflation likely to start rising again towards May or June when base effects from a higher sales tax imposed last year wane and as the state boosts spending on roads, bridges and schools.

"Monetary policy is really too loose," HSBC's Neumann said, referring to the effective policy rate after the tiering effect.

"It's really difficult to see even from a structural perspective how you could factor a pick-up in growth in the next two years and interest rates continue to decline. I think from that perspective, there may be a tightening in store which would have some upward pressure on rates," he said.

Opinions differ on how the central bank may tighten policy.

One way would be to scrap the tiering scheme, combined with a cut of at least 100 basis points in the headline overnight rate to restore confidence in monetary policy.

Some believe the authorities are not ready for such drastic action, with the tiering scheme likely to be taken off in phases.

Barclays' Bibby said the central bank was

BSP/ A5

APC seeks permit to explore nickel field in Palawan

By Daxim L. Lucas

A SUBSIDIARY OF PUBLICLY LISTED APC Group Inc. has filed for permit to do exploration activities in Palawan in the hope of profiting from the strong prices of nickel and chromite in the world market.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), APC said its fully-owned subsidiary, APC Mining Corp., had asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to approve its exploration permit covering an area of 1,134 hectares in Barangay Apurawan in Aborlan, a municipality in Palawan.

The area is known to contain nickel and chromite deposits. Nickel and chromite—two metals commonly mined together—are found in heavy concentrations in Palawan where several other mining firms are already engaged in commercial production.

Nickel is especially valuable since it is the main raw material in producing industrial-grade stainless steel. Nickel prices on the world market have soared in recent years due to the strong demand for the metal from China.

Earlier, APC Mining has filed for three exploration permits in the provinces of Zambales and Misamis Oriental, bringing aggregate area applied to 14,144 hectares basically containing chromite and nickel.

For all the areas applied for, APC Mining will conduct exploration activities and will apply for a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement with the DENR once the exploration works prove the presence of mineable deposits at commercial quantities," the company said.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 15, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Aslatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10	10.5	10	10.25	72,100
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	56.5	57	56	56.5	774,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	65	63.5	64	1,551,400
China Banking Corp.	880	880	880	880	550
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2,280,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	102	102	99	100	29,440
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59	59	58	58	674,100
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	100
Philippine National Bank	47.5	47.5	47.5	47.5	2,000
Phil. Savings Bank	62.5	62.5	62.5	62.5	1,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	34	34	33	33	195,400
Security Bank Corp.	75	75	74.5	74.5	19,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	59	59	57.5	58	8,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	386,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1580	1580	1580	1580	700
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	680	680	675	675	1,160
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2100	2100	2100	390
Ivantage Corp.	1.52	1.54	1.5	1.54	900,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	14,141,000
First Gen Corp.	52.5	52.5	52.5	52.5	60,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	70.5	70.5	70	70	351,000
Manila Electric Co. A	70.5	70.5	69	69.5	205,400
Manila Electric Co. B	70.5	70.5	69.5	70	1,155,300
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	1,195,000
Petron Corp.	4.35	4.4	4.35	4.35	1,728,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	1,700,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	128,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	10,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25.5	25	25.5	18,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	51.5	53.5	50.5	53	357,100
RFM Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.55	2.55	2,503,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62	62	61	62	63,100
San Miguel Corp. B	70.5	71.5	70	71.5	213,200
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.28	2.3	12,105,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18	17.5	17.5	323,900
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.7	1.7	1.64	1.66	6,587,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.45	194,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	2,045,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	120,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	253,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.44	0.5	0.44	0.5	120,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.63	0.67	0.63	0.67	20,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.32	0.35	14,730,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	96,600,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	8,700,000
Ayala Corp.	560	560	550	555	154,450
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8	8	8	472,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.5	6.8	6.5	6.8	4,242,000
AJO Net Holdings Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.0675	0.07	35,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	200,000
APC Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	5,080,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	11,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.46	1.48	1.46	1.48	1,625,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.45	3.45	55,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.65	4.75	4.65	4.65	349,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	5,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.25	3.3	11,646,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	338,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5	4.9	4.9	91,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	80,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	150,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.5	1,926,700
Keppel Holdings	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	4,000
Medco Holdings	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	160,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	100,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	7.9	8.1	7.5	7.8	421,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.7	1.76	1.7	1.72	182,000
Pacifica	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	15,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.28	11,850,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	30,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	370,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	20,690,000
SM Investments Corp.	365	365	347.5	352.5	572,840
South China Resources Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	16	15.5	15.75	5,170,800
Belle Corp.	1.32	1.34	1.3	1.32	4,233,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	1,600,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.7	32,000
C&P Homes Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.5	2.5	686,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	40,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.2	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.77	15,300,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.84	1.84	223,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	5,300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.62	1.66	1.62	1.66	26,887,000
Interport Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	491,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	10,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	6,980,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.81	0.81	2,460,000
Megaworld Corp.	3	3.1	2.95	3.05	35,637,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	73,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.89	0.95	0.87	0.89	78,580,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19	19	18.25	18.5	4,215,100
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.62	0.63	0.61	0.61	1,460,000
SM Development Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.85	3.85	151,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	10.75	11	6,712,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.7	0.72	0.68	0.7	930,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.17	0.15	0.17	53,680,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	39,800
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	50,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.72	1.72	11,126,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1335	1335	1310	1315	54,360
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.6	878,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2335	2335	2250	2260	242,510
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	220,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	22,000
IPVG Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	328,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	1,300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	4,500,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	84,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.14	2.2	2.14	2.16	24,000
Philweb Corp.	0.046	0.046	0.044	0.045	91,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	919,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	29.5	29.5	28.5	28.5	1,444,900
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.08	1.14	1.08	1.14	232,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	942,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.9	0.92	0.9	0.92	200,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	950	950	950	950	20
Ipeople Inc.	3.25	3.25	3.15	3.15	200,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	45,000
Paxys Inc.	26.5	26.5	25.5	25.5	446,500
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	50	50	50	50	2,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5	5.1	4.95	4.95	930,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.2	2,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	20,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.6	9.6	9.4	9.5	2,052,000
Benguet Corp. A	11	11	11	11	23,300
Geograce Res. Phil., Inc.	1.34	1.36	1.28	1.34	29,931,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	2,060,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	100,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	159,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.032	0.032	0.031	0.032	16,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.018	0.018	1,168,400,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.15	4.15	7,423,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	19.25	19.75	19.25	19.5	54,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.71	0.74	0.69	0.69	260,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.2	1.2	1.14	1.14	7,970,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.41	0.45	0.41	0.44	46,430,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	50,700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	12,300,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	10,100,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	68,000

CURRENCIES

March 15, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.756315	1.000000	48.7280
Japan	Yen	0.006462	0.008544	0.4163
United Kingdom	Pound	1.464302	1.936100	94.3423
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096775	0.127956	6.2350
Switzerland	Franc	0.621969	0.822368	40.0723
Canada	Dollar	0.643563	0.850919	41.4636
Singapore	Dollar	0.492842	0.651636	31.7529
Australia	Dollar	0.594775	0.786411	38.3202
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.006248	2.652661	129.2589
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201759	0.266766	12.9990
Brunei	Dollar	0.491241	0.649519	31.6498
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000108	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022988	0.030395	1.4811
UAE	Dirham	0.205979	0.272346	13.2709
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.322200	64.4282
Korea	Won	0.000799	0.001057	0.0515
China	Yuan**	0.097740	0.129232	6.2972
Argentina	Peso	0.244170	0.322841	15.7314
Brazil	Real	0.359294	0.475059	23.1487
Denmark	Kroner	0.134267	0.177528	8.6506
India	Rupee	0.017134	0.022655	1.1039
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215474	0.284900	13.8826
Mexico	New Peso	0.067845	0.089705	4.3711
New Zealand	Dollar	0.522534	0.690894	33.6659
Norway	Kroner	0.123409	0.163172	7.9510
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012468	0.016485	0.8033
South Africa	Rand	0.101383	0.134048	6.5319
Sweden	Kroner	0.107803	0.142537	6.9455
Syria	Pound	0.014570	0.019264	0.9387
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022926	0.030313	1.4771
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000352	0.000466	0.0227

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 14, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 14, 2007

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0954, Series of 2007

Bank lending up 9.4% in Jan

Total loans extended by the banking system reached P1.98T

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK lending expanded by 9.4 percent in January compared to a year ago.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday reported that, based on the monetary authority's new data series, bank lending continued to grow, although at a slightly slower pace compared to the 11 percent growth registered in December 2006.

"Since September, loans have been expanding more robustly compared to previous months," Tetangco said.

The new series, an expansion of the previous information which was limited to data on lending by commercial banks alone, is now based on a broader measure of lending which includes the activities of thrift banks and rural banks.

Total loans extended by the banking system amounted to P1.98 trillion in January versus P1.81 trillion a year ago. Of the total, 31.7 percent was absorbed by the financial institution, real estate and business services, 20.3 percent by manufacturing and 18.3 percent by community, social and personal services.

Based on the old series, which only cited commercial bank lending, Tetangco said loans still increased by 8.1 percent in January over a year ago compared to the previous month's 10.1 percent.

On a month-on-month basis, commercial bank lending went up by 0.2 percent compared to 2.3 percent in December.

Under the new series, lending to all sectors posted positive growth rates, with the exception of transportation, storage and communication which registered a decline of 1.7 percent.

The growth continued to be driven by lending to financial institutions, real estate and business services and community, social, and personal services sectors, as well as the wholesale and retail trade sector.

Tetangco noted that lending to the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector accelerated by 6.7 percent from 4.4 percent in December, while lending to the manufacturing and construction sectors—which accounted for more than a fifth of total loans—reverted to positive territory, from declines recorded the previous months.

"The recent trend increase in bank lending could presage a broadening of the economy's growth drivers," Tetangco said.

"Monetary authorities will continue to monitor credit developments to ensure that inflationary pressures are addressed pre-emptively in order to safeguard price stability, which is integral to sustained, strong growth," he added.

The BSP wants to see a clear uptrend in bank lending before lifting the tiering scheme on overnight money, intended to be a temporary measure to guard against inflation while prodding banks to lend more.

Since Nov. 2, the BSP under the tiering system has offered an interest rate of 7.5 percent only on its first P5 billion of overnight borrowings from each bank; 5.5 percent on placements in excess of P5 billion up to P10 billion; and, 3.5 percent for anything greater than P10 billion.

Survey prompts telco to improve services

By Riza T. Olchondra

ONE OUT OF FOUR PHONE USERS AND Internet subscribers in Metro Manila feels service providers in the country do not deliver on their promises, according to a recent survey.

The survey conducted by Geiser Maclang Market Research in February and commissioned by Bayan Telecommunications Inc. (BayanTel), a member of the Lopez group of companies, focused on 300 respondents who are subscribers of major landline, cellular and Internet service providers in Metro Manila.

According to the survey, 25 percent of the 300 respondents were "very angry" with their providers.

Broken down into services, some 90 percent of landline users said they have experienced frustrations with their service, while 85 percent of Internet and 92 percent of cellular subscribers experienced let-downs with theirs.

Forty-five percent of Internet, 23 percent of landline phone and 32 percent of cellular phone subscribers said they had "moderate or higher levels of distrust" for communications service providers.

"In an industry that prides itself of so much growth and high levels of service, the results were shocking," BayanTel executive consultant Tunde Fafunwa told reporters on Thursday.

"Of course we are part of it (industry that disappointed subscribers) but we are committed to doing something about it. We have taken the study seriously."

To show its commitment to better services, BayanTel has changed its brand to "Bayan" and has started offering a slew of new and improved services, Fafunwa said.

First on its armful of new service propositions is a money-back guarantee and rebate program covering all services.

"If for any reason the subscriber gets a new service and wants to back out within 15 days, they will get their money back. No questions asked," Fafunwa said.

Under the rebate program, a one-day refund equivalent to P100 will be given for every four hours that the customer's phone or DSL connection remains unrepaired.

If a subscriber's connection is out for more than 72 hours, the service fee for the month affected will be waived.

"Even in times of natural disasters, a subscriber does not have to pay for services that were not rendered," Fafunwa said.

GOINGS-ON

BDO cited by Asiamoney

BANCO DE ORO UNIVERSAL BANK (BDO) WAS cited as the country's Best Managed Company-Mid-Cap Corporate for 2006 by Asiamoney, a regional financial magazine.

The bank received the same recognition in 2005. Also in 2005, BDO and wholly owned investment banking subsidiary BDO Capital & Investment Corp. were both cited by Asiamoney as the best in their respective fields. BDO Universal Bank was adjudged "Best Domestic Bank," while BCIC received the "Best Equity House" and "Best Debt House" awards.

- Asiamoney conducts the survey yearly to determine the best managed companies in the countries covered. Its respondents include fund managers, analysts and investors representing major international and domestic players.

TIM unit teams up with Sun

IT FIRM Total Information Management Corp. (TIM) is harnessing the partnership of its wholly owned subsidiary Automated Technologies Inc. with Sun Microsystems to help propel the company toward higher profitability this year.

ATI was appointed by Sun Microsystems as a business partner and to handle the IT maintenance services for the latter. The formed Sun Business Unit (SBU) targets telecom firms and government entities as its main clients. The new firm will also tap new accounts, particularly small and medium business enterprises.

Marketing trends meet

NEW TRENDS in the marketing and sales industries will be discussed by top practitioners in the 3rd Market Master Conference: Brand and Trade Initiatives on March 21, at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City.

Among the topics and the speakers are: "How to use Blue Ocean Strategy to develop and launch new products" by Josiah Go, chair and chief marketing strategist of Mansmith and Fielders Inc.; "How to Strategize Thru A Brand Portfolio of Products" by Dondi Gomez, category director-head of marketing training, Unilever Philippines; "How To Formulate Your Brand DNA for Success" by Weena Pineda of Splash Holdings; "How to Benefit From In- Store Consumer Behavior" by Benedicto Cid, managing director of AC Nielsen Philippines, and "How Suppliers Can Maximize Retail Investment" by Wilson Lim (Abenson, Waltermart and ElectroWorld) and Joanne Lim of Waltermart Supermarket.

Net proceeds of the conference go to chosen beneficiaries involved in education and people empowerment, including the Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Sex Abuse (CPTC-SA) and the Markprof Foundation.

CHEd cites UE

THE COMMISSION on Higher Education (CHEd) has cited the University of the East as a "Center of Development in Information Technology Education."

The awarding ceremony will be held on March 23 at the Bayview Park Hotel, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

CHEd Chair Carlito S. Puno, in a letter to president Ester A. Garcia , said UE was chosen based on the criteria set by the technical panel for information technology education and approved by the commission.

Toyota to invest ...

From page B1

Indonesia, Malaysia and South Africa.

"Since the production of our very first G-type transmission in August 1992, we are able to attain good results and expand our business because of the cooperation from highly skilled and excellent work of the local Filipino team members," TAP president Yasuro Takeuchi said. "We are currently moving forward to prepare for the employment of over 300 new workers and build the new 14,000-square-meter production plant and line."

Toyota Motors Corp. senior managing director Akira Okabe described TAP as "an industry leader in quality in manual transmissions" and "an important contributor to fulfilling [Toyota's] global goals."

"We have decided to increase our investment in this crucial hub of our production strategy, and we have decided to increase our commitment to the growth potential of the Philippines," Okabe said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo led the ground-breaking ceremony for the new building today at the TAP manufacturing facility yesterday. She was joined by other government officials including Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila, and Toyota officers headed by Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. chair George S.K. Ty and TMC's Okabe.

Toyota has made substantial investments in the manual transmission production in the Philippines. The firm said it is "committed" to contributing further to the development of the Philippine automobile industry as well as the regional economy through parts production and exports.

Shares close ...

From page B1

3,043.61 after trading between 3,032.74 and 3,081.45. The broader all-share index lost 12.18 points to 1,973.59.

Gains led declines 48 to 43, with 68 stocks unchanged.

Turnover dropped to 2.7 billion shares worth P2.4 billion ($50 million) from 5.2 billion shares worth P4.3 billion on Wednesday. *AFP*

Remittances from OFWs up 20% in January

From page B1

improved access to financial services through the establishment of additional remittance centers and tie-ups abroad, particularly in the Middle East, Europe and North America.

"These services facilitated the swift and efficient delivery of remittances to beneficiaries," the BSP chief said.

With the enhanced services offered by banks and money transfer operators, the BSP expects that more than 90 percent of OFW cash remittances will be coursed through banks this year.

"This compares favorably to 2001, when it was estimated that only about 72 percent of cash remittances passed through the banks," Tetangco said.

The rest of the funds flow through informal channels, defined as unlicensed or unregulated operations such as friends, acquaintances or other travelers.

An earlier study on the Mexican experience showed that remittances held as deposits in the banking system were two to three times more beneficial than those coursed elsewhere as these formal flows could be channeled to investments including small and microbusinesses. As such, the BSP is promoting the use of formal banking channels as a safer and more productive cash remittance system for millions of Filipinos working abroad.

NEW MEMBER ECONOMY
The Asian Development Bank recently welcomed Ireland into its fold. The European nation on March 5 became the 66th economy to join the institution. Above, members of the Irish trade delegation, as well as Irish consulate officials led by Irish Ambassador to the Philippines Richard O'Brien (eighth from left, standing), pose with officers of Asian Development Bank to mark the event.

World Water Day

COMMENTARY

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

MARCH 22 IS WORLD WATER DAY.

"UN Water has identified water scarcity as the theme for World Water Day 2007," according to the World Water Day website. "This day will provide an opportunity to reflect on the challenges posted by the unsustainable increase in water use and its degradation across the globe."

During a meeting held on March 8, leaders of the Alyansa Agrikultura recommended that, on World Water Day, a call should be made to convene a national multi-sectoral water conference and address the crisis, especially as it occurs in the Philippines.

A more serious problem

The United Nations defines water scarcity as "the point at which the aggregate impact of all users impinges on the supply or quality of water under prevailing institutional arrangements to the extent that the demand by all sectors, including the environment, cannot be satisfied fully."

Water scarcity is a more serious problem than most people realize. A major study completed only this year, "The Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture" reveals that one in three people today face water shortages.

It states the following grim facts:

"Around 1.2 billion people, or almost a fifth of the world's population, live in areas of physical scarcity, and 500 million are approaching this situation. Another 1.6 billion people, or almost a quarter of the world's population, face economic water shortage where countries lack the necessary infrastructure to take water from rivers and aquifers."

Below is a table that shows how water is distributed.

USE OF WATER	Water (liters)	Proportionate Use (times)
Food Production	2,000 - 3,000	1000
Domestic Needs	20-300	10 to 100
Drinking Water	2-3	1

From the above table, we conclude that there is much potential for increasing the efficiency of water used in agriculture.

Chile model

Chile is often cited for its citizens' increasing efficiency in the use of water through market based mechanisms. Tradable water rights were institutionalized, private markets developed, and water rights traded as a commodity.

The reforms in that country increased the scarcity value of water and created incentives for investment in efficiency gains. As a result, sophisticated efficient water management systems were put in place. In a period of 15 years, irrigation efficiency increased by 22 - 26 percent. This is the equivalent of freeing up an additional 264,000 hectares for crops and saving P20 billion for developing water supplies.

However, there is a downside to this. Water scarcity prices did not reflect the cost of environmental damage because environmental externalities are not adequately priced in the free market.

Reforms are now being made to realign private markets with public interest. Regulatory provisions are being formulated to restrict speculative activity, dismantle monopolies, and strengthen environmental protections.

Low technology solutions

Since agriculture consumes 70 percent of all water, we must immediately look to this area for efficiency improvements, especially since they directly impact the poor.

Today, innovation is creating conditions in which smaller, poorer farmers can join the technological revolution in water management.

Micro-level irrigation is at the cutting edge of emerging water management technologies, and has tremendous potential. Drip technology uses less water than surface technology, delivering it directly to the crop, and reducing salinization and water-logging.

Technologies have become cheaper and thus more accessible to small farmers. Cheap, small-scale bucket-and-drip kits have been developed for vegetable cultivation on household plots. One model uses off-the-shelf cloth filters and plastic containers to replace sensitive metallic emitters, thus reducing the costs of irrigation to $250 a hectare. Because of this technology in many countries, the area under cultivation has doubled with the same amount of water. More studies have shown that drip techniques cut water use by 30 percent to 60 percent and boost yields by 5 percent to 50 percent. Farmers in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Sudan claim threefold to fourfold yield increases using drip irrigation and hand-watering from water-harvesting tanks.

Another innovation is the treadle pump. This is a cheap and affordable technology (P600-P1,500) that draws water from groundwater sources close to the surface to irrigate up to 0.5 hectare. This has resulted in documented annual returns of investment (ROI) of 130 percent to 850 percent when combined with market-oriented production.

Commenting on the use of low-cost irrigation technologies, the United Nations 2006 Human Development states: "Working on observed returns to current investment, it has been estimated that the adoption of new technologies by 100 million small farmers could generate net benefits of $100 billion or more. Including the multiplier effects of increased demand, investment and employment, total net benefits could rise threefold, increasing annual incomes by up to $500 for those living on less that $1 a day.

Farmers' role

During World Water Day next week, it is hoped that one of the events will be an announcement that there will be a national multi-sectoral water conference.

It is also hoped that agriculture will play an important part, with women farmers taking a leadership role.

This will provide not only the growth, but also the equity and gender perspective, so necessary in addressing the water crisis effectively.

For more information on this, please contact Agnes Balota at (02) 927-1875.

(The author is Agriwatch chair; former Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 852-2112.)

BSP interest rate ...

From page B2

likely to go back to a single overnight rate this year, but at a higher level than the implied rate of about 6 percent under the tiering scheme.

He felt the central bank would be weighing any rate move against its inflation target for 2008 and bank lending—the last thing it wants is to create renewed bad loan problems for banks.

Both HSBC and Barclays expect a rate move in the second quarter, most probably after congressional elections in May. *Reuters*

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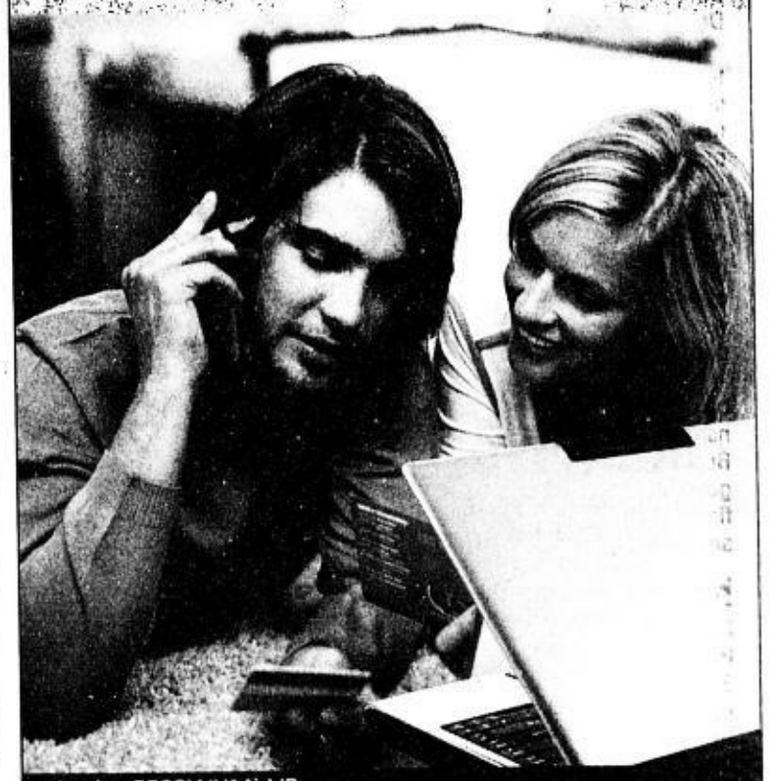

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US current account deficit hits record high for 5th straight year

WASHINGTON—THE DEFICIT in the broadest measure of trade hit an all-time high in 2006 and for the first time, the United States even ran a deficit on investment income.

The Commerce Department reported that the imbalance in the current account jumped by 8.2 percent to $856.7 billion, representing a record 6.5 percent of the total economy.

It marked the fifth straight year the current account deficit set a record.

Investment flows turned negative by $7.3 billion from a surplus of $11.3 billion in 2005.

It was the first time investment income has been negative on records going back to 1929.

That means foreigners earned more on their US holdings than Americans earned on their overseas investments.

While the US has run deficits in its trade in goods every year since 1976, until last year it had still been able to record a surplus in investments.

Analysts said that figure turned negative because of the large amount of US assets that have been transferred to foreign hands over the past three decades to pay for the imported cars, clothing and electronic goods American consumers love to buy.

The Bush administration contends the large foreign holdings of US assets are a sign of strength. But many economists worry that foreigners might suddenly decide they want to hold less in US stocks, bonds and other assets.

A rapid withdrawal could cause the value of the dollar against other currencies, as well as US stock prices, to plunge while pushing interest rates higher. If the disruption were serious enough, it could push the country into a recession.

"The hope is that the transition to a lower current account deficit goes smoothly, but the danger is that people stop loaning us money before they start buying our goods," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's in New York.

The current account is the broadest measure of trade because it covers not only trade in goods and services but also investment flows between countries. It also represents the amount of US assets that have been transferred into foreign hands to cover the gap between American exports and imports.

On Wall Street, stocks had another wild day, falling sharply over continuing concerns with sub-prime mortgage lenders before staging a rebound. The Dow Jones industrial averaged ended the day up 57.44 points at 12,133.40.

Democrats contend the current account deficit illustrates that America's control over its economic destiny is being transferred to countries like China and Japan that hold sizable amounts of US government bonds and other assets.

The new report indicated the current account deficit for the final three months of this year did show improvement, dropping by 14.6 percent to $195.8 billion after hitting a record of $229.4 billion in the third quarter.

The improvement reflected a big drop in oil prices from their record highs this summer.

Despite five straight years of the current account deficit hitting new records, economists said there were signs the imbalance may narrow a bit this year.

Economist Nigel Gault with Global Insight predicted the 2007 current account deficit would shrink slightly to $807 billion (612.15 billion euros), the first decline since 2001. *AP*

A BOARD displaying the Malaysian composite index chart is seen while an investor (foreground) sits on a bench at a stock brokerage in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysian share prices ended the morning session yesterday 0.72 percent higher on a technical rebound, in line with gains in regional bourses after Wall Street staged a recovery overnight, dealers said.

AFP PHOTO/TENGKU BAHAR

Asian shares rebound as Wall St soothes nerves

SINGAPORE—ASIAN SHARES REbounded more than 1 percent on Thursday following a global sell-off, as a recovery on Wall Street and a falling yen encouraged investors to seek bargains among exporters and other beaten-down stocks.

But caution prevailed, as market players tried to assess the risks of a crisis in the US mortgage sector spilling over into the wider economy and hitting demand for Asian goods.

The Japanese currency extended gains against the dollar and euro as the rebound in stock prices soothed fears that investors may continue to dump riskier assets from their portfolios and pay off the cheap yen loans that had financed them.

Asian share indexes had dived on Wednesday—most by between 2 percent and 3 percent—after concern of rising defaults in US mortgage lending prompted the second big wave of selling in global equity markets in recent weeks.

Gold rose, tracking firmer oil prices as US crude extended Wednesday's gains that had been made on the back of declining gasoline stockpiles in the United States.

Tokyo's Nikkei rose 1.1 percent—after falling nearly 3 percent

Investors hunt for bargains

on Wednesday—while MSCI's broadest index of shares elsewhere in Asia was up 1.5 percent at 0610 GMT.

US stocks posted modest gains on Wednesday, as worries eased that losses for firms operating in the subprime mortgage sector—which lends to borrowers with a weaker credit history—might slow economic growth.

Australia's S&P ASX 200 rose 1.9 percent, helped by a 2.3 percent gain for mining heavyweight BHP Billiton, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 0.8 percent.

Stocks benchmarks in South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore gained between 1.2 percent and 1.7 percent.

But traders warned the turmoil that has swept global markets since late February may not have run its full course.

"Until we get a resolution to the issues that we are seeing in the US subprime market, and see what impact it is going to have on the global economy, we are likely to see a lot of volatility," said Simon Doyle, head of strategy at Schroder Investment Management in Australia.

The dollar edged up to around 117.15 yen by early yesterday afternoon, as investors cautiously returned to the so-called carry trade—borrowing in a low-yielding currency, such as the yen, to buy higher-yielding assets.

The lower yen helped shares in Japanese exporters, who see the value of their earnings from the key US market grow when the dollar is stronger.

Toyota Motor Corp. rose 1.6 percent, Sony Corp. gained 1.7 percent and Canon Inc. was up 1.1 percent.

The benchmark 10-year Japanese government bond yield rose 2 basis points to 1.585 percent, up from a 2-½ month low of 1.565 percent hit on Wednesday.

Masuhisa Kobayashi, chief JGB strategist at Barclays Capital, said the JGB market has reacted more strongly to the latest anxiety over the US mortgage market than to the initial sell-off in equity markets in late February.

"The latest drop seems to have struck a chord," Kobayashi said. "It may take some time to see how extensive the problem is and how much impact it will have on the US economy." *Reuters*

Opec set to continue oil output restraint

VIENNA—OPEC IS READY TO KEEP existing output curbs, balancing rapidly declining oil stocks in consumer nations against the risk recent selling in share markets could herald an economic downturn.

Opec was due to begin talks yesterday to set production policy for the group that pumps over a third of the world's oil.

Ministers have said they favor keeping output steady, emphasizing the need to ensure the 1.7 million barrels per day of cuts, roughly six percent of supplies, agreed at Opec's previous two meetings are delivered in full.

The oil minister of leading exporter Saudi Arabia, Ali Al-Naimi, backed the view Opec cuts were achieving their goal in an interview published in al-Hayat newspaper on Thursday.

"The state of the market is comfortable and there is no need to change output," Naimi said.

Some ministers are wary two waves of selling on global equity markets could presage a bigger sell-off that would hurt economic growth and oil demand.

Crude oil seesawed around $58 a barrel, touching its lowest since mid-February at one point and ending up one cent.

On Thursday US crude was up 34 cents at $58.50.

Nigerian Oil Minister Edmund Daukoru said the risks to oil were to the downside.

"The market is bearish," he told reporters.

"The global economy is slowing down. China is cooling off, India is cooling off, even the US that is the engine. If you put all the factors together including non-Opec growth it is bearish so we are looking to implement the full cuts."

Analysts estimate Opec has made good one million bpd of the pledged reductions. Opec puts the figure closer to 1.2 million.

"There are downside risks from high interest rates, the weak dollar and the US housing market and loan problems. We need to be vigilant," an Opec official said.

Delegates said Opec was likely to meet again in June to review the situation. *Reuters*

Asian growth to slow, but not as much as feared, poll says

SINGAPORE—ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIES are likely to slow this year but should perform much better than was anticipated just a few months ago, thanks to a pick-up in consumer spending, a Reuters poll shows.

The survey of 12 regional economies, excluding Japan, shows that most are expected to slow a little from 2006 as exports cool, but they are forecast to rebound next year.

The slowdown this year means inflation forecasts have been lowered in just over half of the countries polled.

Thailand is the only economy where the 2007 growth forecast has been slashed as political uncertainty following a military coup last September plus subsequent policy flip-flops have knocked consumer confidence and investment.

For the rest of Asia, the outlook is brighter than estimated, with lower interest rates, buoyant housing and job markets and higher government spending likely to bolster domestic demand.

Domestic consumption accounts for around 60 percent of Taiwan's gross domestic product and makes up about 70 percent of GDP in the Philippines.

"In 2007, domestic demand is the buzz word," said Dong Tao, chief regional economist at Credit Suisse in Hong Kong.

He said the main risk to Asia's economic outlook now were worries about a US recession and volatility in global financial markets.

"We have been on the optimistic side for a long time," Tao said, referring to domestic demand.

"But this is not a one-way street. The biggest risk is from the other side of the world," he said. "Fear of a US recession and volatility in the capital markets."

Rising consumption is also the reason why economists say a slowdown in China's booming economy is unlikely to be as great as they had estimated in the last poll in November.

China's GDP growth is forecast to ease to 10.0 percent this year from 10.7 percent in 2006, against a previous forecast of 9.5 percent.

The world's fourth-largest economy is set for a fifth straight year of double-digit growth, reinforcing the view that further monetary tightening will be needed to curb inflation.

In Southeast Asia, economists have cut Thailand's 2007 GDP growth estimate to 4.0 percent, which would be a six-year low, from 4.5 percent in November.

"Basically, political uncertainty is seen weighing on both consumption and investment. Right now, only the external sector is seen supporting the economy," economist Vishnu Varathan at Forecast in Singapore said.

Inflation in much of Asia is expected to be tame in coming months as global growth is cooling and oil prices have declined.

The Reuters poll forecast average inflation in the Philippines would ease to 4 percent this year from 6.2 percent in 2006. Malaysian inflation is seen slipping to 2.7 percent from 3.6 percent last year. *Reuters*

Gold, silver off 1-wk low; investors cautious

SINGAPORE—GOLD ROSE ABOVE $646 an ounce Thursday to track a rebound in crude oil but investors remained cautious after the previous day's drop, even with little changed in terms of fundamentals.

Jewelers from India and Thailand bought gold at lower levels, although the price rebound also encouraged light selling in Singapore. Other precious metals firmed, with silver moving away from Wednesday's one-week low.

Gold rose as high as $646.25 and was at $644.60/645.60 by 0653 GMT, higher than $643.00/643.75 late in New York on Wednesday, when it fell to a one-week low of $636.50 as tumbling shares raised fears about another global flight from risk.

"Gold is likely to regain its luster only once investors and traders realize the slide was a poor cousin of a spillover effect of equity markets and that gold's fundamentals remain very much intact," said Pradeep Unni, an analyst at Vision Commodities Services in Dubai.

"However, under the current conditions of global financial market liquidity crunch, such a turnaround would take significant time to bear fruit," he said.

Dealers said worries about the state of the US economy following troubles in the mortgage and housing market, tensions in the Middle East and generally firm crude oil supported gold.

The metal rallied to a nine-month high of $689 on Feb. 26 as growing tensions between the United Nations and Iran over the latter's nuclear ambitions prompted investors to buy gold. *Reuters*

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NISSAN

Gov't to tap $1.6B in ODA funds

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS TO GET $1.6 billion in new loans from multilateral lenders Asian Development Bank and World Bank, which will be used to finance priority reform programs and infrastructure projects this year.

The National Economic and Development Authority announced the projected official development assistance (ODA) loans for 2007 following discussions with the two institutions and other government oversight agencies—the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Finance and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"The lending programs with the said multilateral institutions are consistent with the government's priorities in the following sectors: social reform and development; agriculture, agrarian reform and natural resources; governance and infrastructure development,"

Soft loans to come from WB, ADB

Neda said.

About $1 billion was expected to come from the World Bank.

The funds will go to the following: National Program Support for Tax Administration Reform ($11 million), the Mindanao Rural Development Project Phase 2 ($84 million) and the Development Policy Loan 1 ($250 million), which was already committed last January.

Other projects to be pursued by the World Bank and the Philippine government this year are the National Program Support for Environment and Natural Resources ($50 million), National Roads Improvement and Management Program Phase 2 ($232 million), Private Sector Development Support/PPP Transport (Light Railway Transit 1) ($260 million) and Bicol Power Restoration Project ($18 million).

During the discussions, the World Bank reported that after a year and a half of implementing its Country Assistance Strategy, the Philippines was "on track to meet the high case scenario."

Meanwhile, the ADB is expected to provide at least $650 million to the Philippines this year.

ADB country director Thomas Crouch said the Philippine government-ADB partnership was "outstanding" in the previous year, as new records were achieved in lending approvals ($650 million) since 1998 and disbursements ($750 million in program loan tranches plus $86.6 million in project loans).

"Performance indicators for the 21 active loans remained sound, making the Philippines portfolio one of ADB's best," Crouch said.

Gatchalian lays claim over hotel

By Daxim L. Lucas

PUBLICLY LISTED WATERFRONT PHILS. Inc. now "owns" the Grand Boulevard Hotel along Roxas Boulevard by virtue of its assumption of the hotel's debts from creditor banks.

This was the declaration made by Chinese-Filipino businessman William Gatchalian—Waterfront's principal owner—as he countered accusations from Grand Boulevard that he was spreading rumors of an impending buyout of the hotel to boost his firm's share price on the stock exchange.

In a briefing, Gatchalian said his group "now owns 78 percent" of Grand Boulevard's obligations to its lenders.

"We bought [the debt] last year from creditor banks," he said.

Gatchalian identified the Export and Industry Bank as the creditor which had sold its receivables from Grand Boulevard to his group, although he declined to reveal how much the outstanding debt was or how much he acquired it for.

He admitted that his group had tried to take control of the hotel but was prevented by successive court battles, which his firms had already won at the level of local courts and the Court of Appeals.

The same case over the hotel's rehabilitation plan is still pending with the Supreme Court, however, after the Panlilio group appealed the decision of lower courts, he said.

Gatchalian said taking control of Grand Boulevard and rehabilitating it was part of Waterfront's expansion in the tourism industry, which he believes holds enormous potential for growth.

"We plan to put up or buy over 20 hotels in two years. Of course, it makes more sense if you get a hotel that is already existing," he said, describing his plan to take control of Grand Boulevard.

Independent oil firms prepare for Pandacan depot closure

By Abigail L. Ho

INDEPENDENT OIL FIRMS ARE READY TO work together with the country's three largest oil companies to prevent a fuel shortage that may arise with the closure of the Pandacan oil depot.

Glenn Yu, president of the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association (Ippca), said a shortage not only in gasoline, diesel and kerosene but also in aviation fuel, shipping fuel and lubricants was imminent if contingency measures for the possible Pandacan depot closure would not be carefully thought out.

Industry data show that half of the country's total fuel requirements go through the Pandacan depot, providing supply to some 1,800 retail stations in Regions 1-4, close to 500 of which are in Metro Manila.

"If not planned properly, we'll really have a shortage. Which is why the three oil companies and the independents have to deliberate on the matter together, to map out a plan to meet customer requirements in the event of a shutdown," he told the INQUIRER.

Since this was already "a matter of national interest," he said it was not just the responsibility of depot occupants Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc. to map out a plan in case the Pandacan depot is ordered closed.

Other oil companies, such as those under Ippca, should also step up to ensure that the expected supply-demand gap would be bridged.

Petron, Shell and Chevron are asking the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision to boot out the three oil firms from the Pandacan oil depot within six months.

Gov't unit offers Ro-Ro financing

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CO.'S MARitime Leasing Corp. has offered a Shipping Enhancement and Acquisition through Lease-Finance (SEAL) program to help boost roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) services in the country, NMLC president Agustin Bengzon said on Thursday.

NMLC is a government unit tasked to help shipping companies finance vessel acquisitions. It said last year that it would offer easy credit terms for the acquisition of Ro-Ro ships and double-hulled tankers.

In a speech before members of the Philippine Interisland Shipping Association at the Diamond Hotel in Manila, Bengzon said NMLC would use government and ODA (overseas development assistance) funds to support SEAL.

"The challenge has always been to narrow the gap between a second hand and a brand new ship. The greater challenge is to have the brand new ship constructed by local shipyards," Bengzon said.

To help Ro-Ro operators, NMLC will finance 90 percent of the vessel's total project cost and will require only a 10-percent deposit without real estate collateral or mortgage, he said.

Each locally made Ro-Ro vessel with 500 to 1,000 gross revenue tonnage, which refers to the total enclosed space in a ship, is priced at about $3 million or P150 million.

The price is considerably higher when shipowners buy ships from overseas, such as China, South Korea or Japan, according to a study from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Bengzon said NMLC will prioritize applications for the acquisition of ships that will serve ports in tourist destinations, underserved routes, and the country's Super Regions.

He said the NMLC will also support the development of the local shipbuilding industry, especially in the introduction of new and locally-built ships in order to generate investments and provide employment opportunities.

The Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) had said that the country was in dire need of new Ro-Ro ships, among other seagoing vessels.

Gov'ts 'Magic 25' project launched

DAVAO CITY—THE government has launched a program to convince Filipinos in Saudi Arabia to spend at least SAR25 (P324) a month on Philippine products.

The project, dubbed Magic 25, was aimed at raising at least $10 million in additional revenues for Philippine exporters, according to Trade Assistant Secretary Merly Cruz.

Cruz said there were 1.4 million overseas Filipino workers in the oil-rich Muslim country. If each of them spends P324 a month, it would roughly translate to P454 million in earnings.

Cruz told reporters at the weekly Club 888 Forum held at the Marco Polo yesterday that they visited cities where the majority of OFWS were staying.

"Our main target is to market our own products to Filipinos there," she said.

Cruz said the government also launched a separate campaign to lure Saudis to buy more Philippine products.

She said among those being pushed to the Saudi market were bananas.

"Banana puree and mango raw food are seen as potential Philippine products to the KSA market," Cruz said.

Cruz said the Philippines could also send tuna and vegetables to Saudi Arabia. *Judy Quiros, Inquirer Mindanao*

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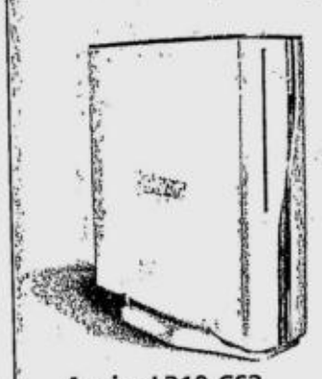

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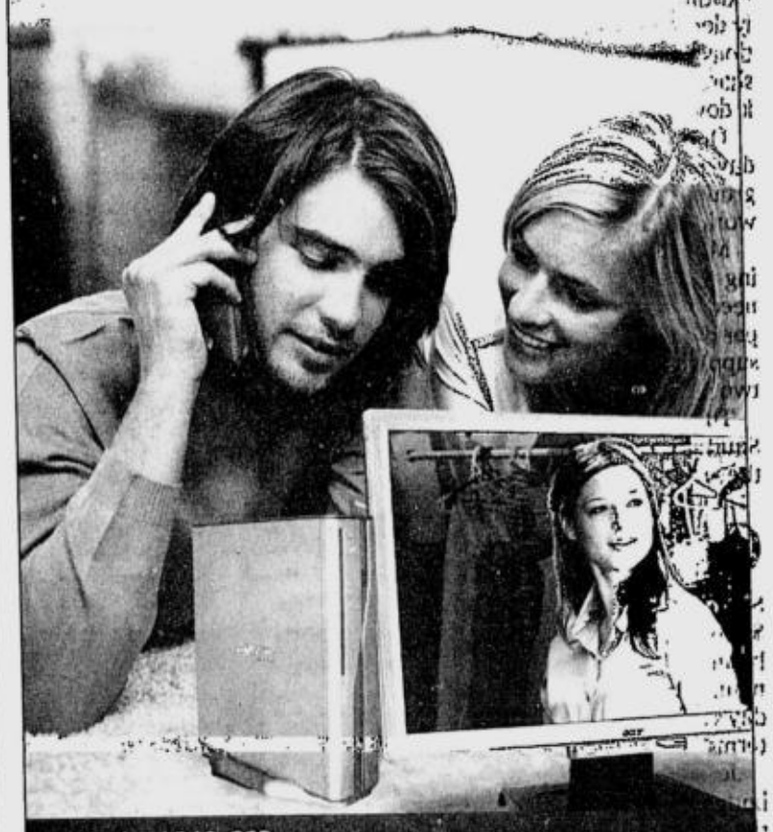

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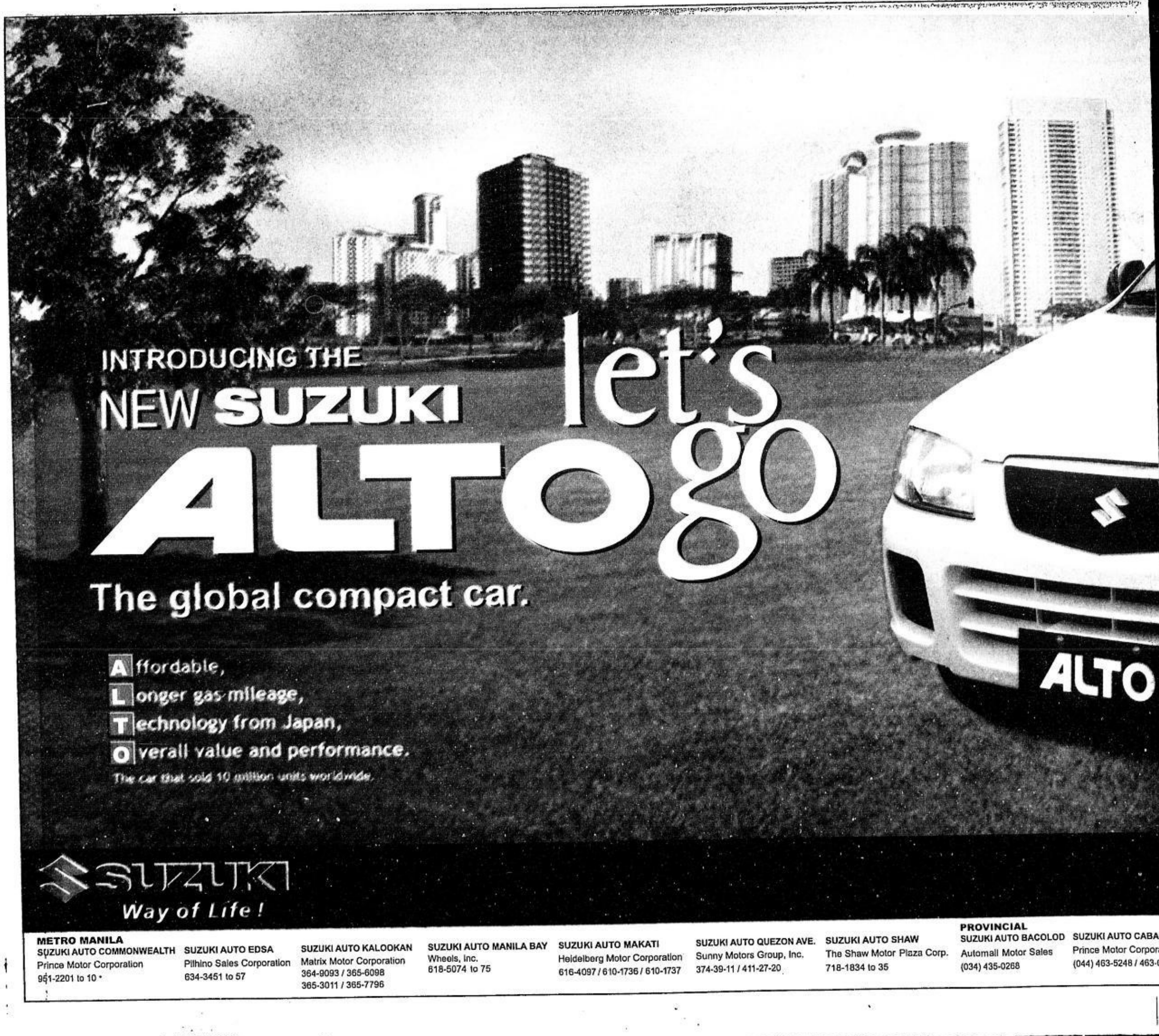
Suzuki Rolls Out

Leading compact car manufacturer **Suzuki** brings to the Philippines a car that has made a name for itself around the world for stability, fuel efficiency and affordability-the **Suzuki ALTO.**

Initially introduced in Japan in 1979, the Suzuki Alto has rolled out more than 10M units worldwide, particularly in Japan, India and Europe. Measuring an overall height of 1,455 mm., overall width of 1,495 mm., an overall length of 3,495 mm., wheel base of 2,360 mm., ground clearance of 160 mm. and weighs 760 kgs. (curb weight), the Suzuki Alto is one of the most compact cars in the market today. It is packed with an 800 cc., 3-cylinder, 12-valve engine with a maximum output of 47 hp. @ 6,200 rpm and a maximum torque of 62 Nm @ 3,000 rpm, and it employs the standard Suzuki side impact beams on all doors which gives the passengers more protection in case of collisions, a third brake light, front and rear 3-point emergency locking retractable (ELR) seatbelts and rear door child-proof locks.

The Suzuki Alto is fuel injected and computer controlled for maximum fuel efficiency and it comes with a 5-speed manual transmission.

"We are hoping that with the Alto, Suzuki will further be recognized in the Philippines as a manufacturer who continues to bring in unique, high-quality and fun to drive vehicles," says Mr. Kiyoshi Kawahara, president, Suzuki Philippines Inc.



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t the Alto

He added, "With the Alto, Suzuki aims to address the transportation needs of the Filipino motoring market, while giving them a first-hand experience on what Suzuki's compact car technology is all about. We are hoping to see more Suzuki Altos on the streets and thereby becoming a household name in the field of compact cars in the Philippines."

The Suzuki Alto is the most affordable car to date. It has two variants—the Standard with an introductory SRP of Php359, 000 and the De Luxe at Php398, 000. Both models are bundled with a 3-year or 100,000kms. (which ever comes first) warranty. The Suzuki Alto comes in Superior White, Virgin Blue Metallic, Silky Silver Metallic, Bright Red (De Luxe) and Sparkling Olive Green Metallic (De Luxe).

About Suzuki Philippines, Inc

Suzuki Philippines, Inc. is a Japanese multinational firm highly recognized in the vehicle manufacturing industry. The company specializes in producing and distributing distinguished models of motorcycles and automobiles, as well as in the distribution of compact vehicles.

Suzuki has established its reputation worldwide for quality, versatility and innovation and has created a heritage of trust and reliability

Media Contact:

Christine Grace C. Sarmiento
Suzuki Philippines Inc
Danny Floro St., Bagong Ilog, Pasig City
christine.sarmiento@suzuki.com.ph

ATUAN
on
9

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 2007

People, Events & Products

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Waste-to-energy know-how available

ENERGY FROM WASTEWATER? sounds strange, but true, according to Eva Matibag, Manila Water manager for project development,

Matibag said the technology involves the extraction and collection of methane while processing sludge collected from households. The biogas will then be used as fuel for generators that would be installed in a pre-identified community.

Matibag said that Manila Water has, in fact, presented such a plan to Barangay Magallanes in Makati City, adding that the villagers were receptive to the idea.

The project, called the Makati South Waste-to-Energy System, would involve modification of Manila Water's sewage treatment plant in the locality to efficiently turn on the generator and produce 300 kilowatts of electricity.

Wastewater or used water will sustain the system and help in the company's efforts and commitment to maintain a safer and cleaner environment by utilizing the energy released in processing wastewater.

To encourage stronger community involvement in the project, a consultation meeting was held in Magallanes where representatives from various sectors of society, including local government units, pertinent government agencies, the academe and non-government organizations were given an insight into the community-based, wastewater-to-energy project.

Magallanes Barangay councilman Rey Marquez welcomed the offer, stressing that "the environment should not be taken for granted."

He also revealed that they are currently implementing a project dubbed "Greening of Makati."

Manila Water said the project is deemed qualified for registration under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), an arrangement under the Kyoto Protocol allowing industrialized countries with a greenhouse gas reduction commitment to invest in cheaper emission reducing projects.

Matibag also said Manila Water intends to replicate its wastewater-to-energy project in other communities within the Metro Manila East Zone.

PPHS '47 Diamond Jubilee

CLASS 1947 OF PANGASINAN PROVINCE (National) High School will celebrate its Diamond Jubilee on March 31, at the Narciso Ramos Sports & Civic Center in Lingayen Pangasinan. First, the Alumni of 1947 will meet at the Narciso Ramos Sports & Civic Center from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, then they will be at the El Pesidente Hotel & Restaurant from 6 p.m. to 12 midnight. The members of the Steering Committee for the celebtration are: engineer Hector W. Campos, chairand members Natividad A. Cruz, Milagros B. Fronda, Cocepcion S. Dumayos, Felisce P. Oblinario, Teresa M. Manuel, Imelda C. Torio, Susano Lopez, Pascual Baltazar and Maciliano de Guzman. For more details contact the following: engineer Hector W. Campos (662-0920); (02) 930-4638; Natividad A. Cruz (075) 662-01-72; Milagros B. Fronda (436-48-31; 668-2622); Imelda C. Torio (662-8212).

MAKATI MED TO BUILD NEW HOSPITAL WING

Makati Med recently held groundbreaking ceremonies to mark the start of construction for a new hospital wing. This is part of a P1.6 billion facilities improvement program that will initially cover construction of a 12-level new wing, which will house, among other facilities, five centers of excellence in health care. Seen burying a time capsule during the commemorative rites are (Left to right) Dr. Benjamin Alimurung, medical director; lawyer Richard Ferrer, president/CEO; Dr. Remedios Suntay, board member; Judy Roxas, board member; and Manny V. Pangilinan, chair.

TBWA selected as Adweek's 2006 Global Agency of the Year

TBWA \ WORLDWIDE WAS recently named Global Agency of the Year by Adweek, one of the primary advertising industry publications in the United States. It was the first time that the agency received this honor from Adweek, but it was the second time it was awarded the title, the first being bestowed by Advertising Age in 2004.

Alison Fahey, editor of Adweek, said "TBWA posted impressive revenue gains, growing mainly by expanding business from existing clients, which just happens to be the smarter way to build an agency. Sometimes we all get too far enamored by big blockbuster account wins and shiny new ad campaigns that go along with them. It's sexy. But what's more difficult, and more interesting in many ways, is for an agency to continuously come up with original ideas to keep existing campaigns fresh as TBWA did."

Over the past two years, TBWA had grown in multiple dimensions, expanding relationships across multiple offices with brands like McDonald's, Nissan, Henkel, Adidas and Michelin, among others by expanding its offering beyond traditional advertising through the philosophy of Disruption.

With each day, Disruption is being adopted and embraced by clients and prospects, bringing TBWA's global networks closer together. Not only has Disruption become an effective global marketing tool, it has also given the network's 9,700 staffers a common focus and language.

TBWA \ Worldwide (www.tbwa.com) creates disruptive ideas for global clients, including Absolut, Apple, Beiersdorf, Henkel, Masterfoods, McDonald's, Michelin, Nissan, Samsonite and Sony PlayStation. TBWA is the most-awarded agency network in the world (The Gunn Report, 2005) and is one of the fastest top-ten global agency networks. TBWA has 258 offices in 75 countries, and approximately 9,700 employees worldwide.

TBWA \ Worldwide is a part of Omnicom Group Inc (NYSE: OMC) (www.omnicomgroup.com). Omnicom is a leading global advertising, marketing and corporate communications company. Omnicom's branded networks and numerous specialty firms provide advertising, strategic media planning and buying, direct and promotional marketing, public relations and other specialty communications services to over 5,000 clients in more than 100 countries.

INT'L SOS HOLDS 3RD POSTGRADUATE COURSE

International SOS recently held its 3rd Postgraduate Course in Emergency Medicine. Shown are the speakers (from left): Dr. Johnny B. Sinon, medical director of International SOS Philippines; Dr. Rene de Jongh, regional director for assistance, International SOS Southeast Asia and Singapore; Serge E. Grynkewich, II, managing director International SOS Philippines, and New Zealand Ambassador David Pine.

PHOTOLINE UPGRADES PHOTOGRAPHER SKILLS

Mel Cortez, one of the country's top portrait photographers, recently conducted a seminar on the latest developments and trends in studio techniques for Photoline employees. The talk includes proper lighting and camera settings to further enhance the photograph taken. Photoline, which is one of the leading providers of quality photo services at low prices, also maintains one of the best-trained staff in the industry. Its more than 60 branches nationwide are equipped with the latest digital printing equipment. Photoline services range from one-hour developing and studio shots to the latest digital cameras and accessories. Professional photographers can avail of their special wholesale printing rates by inquiring at hotline 0917-5384420.

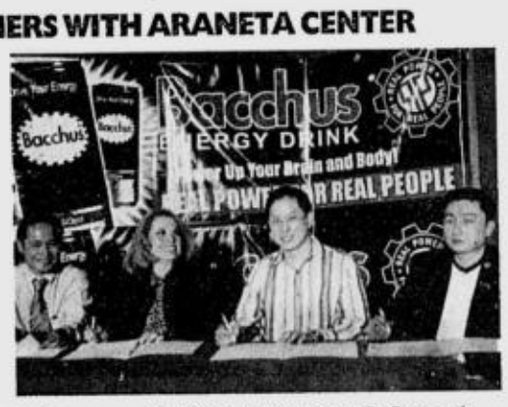
ABCI APPOINTED AS DRYSDALE JUICES LICENSEE

Alternative Beverages Co Inc (ABCI) and Marsman Drysdale Foods Corp (MDFC) signed up a licensing agreement for the manufacture and marketing of MDFC's Drysdale line of ready-to-drink fruit juices. Photo shows Eduardo B. Castillo, vice president-Marsman Drysdale Corp shaking hands with Alfredo M. Herrera, president-ABCI, during the contract signing last Nov. 29. Witnessing the event are (standing from left) Bernie G. Vinluan, plant manager-MDFC; Raul L. Lugtu, VP operations-ABCI; Albert R. Avecilla, VP finance-ABCI; Edwin H. Monzon, VP sales and marketing-ABCI; Roger G. Salazar, OIC-president of MDFC; Raffy T. Reyes, sales and marketing manager-MDFC; and Ely T. Torrado, technical services and materials management manager-MDFC.

FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

In observance of the Fire Prevention Month, New Village Fire Prevention Unit Inc together with Wilson and Jackson Automotive Repair Shop prepare their fire fighters. Present are, from left: Deputy firechief Jacinto Lee Gan Jr., Arnold D. Vicencio and firechief Sherwin Lim.

BACCHUS PARTNERS WITH ARANETA CENTER



Dong-A Pharma Phils, the exclusive distributor of Bacchus Energy Drink formally signed with Uniprom Inc, the leisure and entertainment arm of the Araneta Center Inc, the corporate partnership for the sponsorship of all events in the Araneta Center, including the forthcoming Binibining Pilipinas 2007 Beauty Pageant. Signing in behalf of Uniprom is Manuel M. Atacador, chief operating officer and Stella Marquez-Araneta, chair of the Binibining Pilipinas Charities, while Amen C. Say and Schubert K. Ocampo, president and managing director, respectively of Dong-A Pharma Phils, signed for Bacchus Energy Drink.

ANCOM 2007 IN CLARK EXPO

Clark Development Corp president Levy P. Laus has signed an agreement with the organizers of the Annual Communication 2007 (Ancom 2007) on the use of the Expo Filipino inside Clark Special Economic Zone as the official convention site of the event. Shown are (seated): Danilo C. Sigua, Pampanga District Deputy Grand Master (RIII-A), Levy P. Laus, Clark Development Corp president, and Christopher Florencio Y. Gococo, Tarlac District Deputy Grand Master (RIII-G); (standing, from left): Bro. Eric Jimenez, VW Rene Henson, VW Alfirto Mah, WB Dale Barley, VW Armando Uy and Bro. Par Pamintuan.

ROTARY CLUB QC MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION

The Rotary Club of Tandang Sora, QC District 3780 held its medical and dental mission known as Alay sa Kapwa last Feb. 18, at the GK Talanay, Area B. Ternate St. Barangay Batasan Hills, Quezon City. Sponsored by RiteMed of Unilab where more than 600 indigent families who benefited from the said medical and dental mission.

ProductFiles

EQ B-day Party promo winners

EQ DIAPER CONgratulates the fifty lucky winners of EQ Birthday Party promo who will celebrate their baby's birthday for free at Jollibee. EQ Diaper provides good quality diaper at an economical price for babies and mommies. Plus EQ diaper gives our baby a chance to celebrate a grand birthday party at Jollibee with the whole family. It's not too late to join the promo because there will be more birthday party packages to be given out. Keep sending your entries, you might be one of the lucky winners in the succeeding draws. Please visit www.jsunitrade.com for complete list of winners.

Next generation supplement

NOW AVAILABLE IN leading drug stores nationwide is ABW Leaves of Life, the first and only 100 percent natural and certified organic health supplement that combines the goodness of Alfalfa, Barley, and Wheatgrass - three of nature's super anti-oxidants and nutritional powerhouses. Considered the next generation supplement, ABW Leaves of Life offers multiple natural sources of minerals, vitamins, proteins, enzymes, chlorophyll, amino acids, and antioxidants. ABW Leaves of Life is marketed by Whealth Inc. For more information, visit www.abwhealth.com. You may also call (632)524-6549, e-mail info@abwhealth.com.ph, or send inquiries to TXT 4 INFO 0916-741-0346.

Checking for termites and house pests the easy way

DETECTING PESTS like termites and rodents is easier with the use of HomeSafe tools, specially designed to look for house problems that aren't visible to the naked eye. The HomeSafe devices minimize the risk of human error. These devices can "see" through walls, "hear" unusual activity in the most unexpected places, and may discover totally unrelated flaws along the way. Only one pest control company is trained to handle these exclusive HomeSafe Inspection equipment which composes of an Infrared camera, a moisture meter, an acoustic sensor and a borescope. PestAway Corp (landline no. 861PEST or 861-3403 to 04) is equipped to use the tools and make detailed reports, aside from dealing with other pest-related concerns.

Prebiotic Inulin fiber for optimum health

INULIN IS A NATURAL DIETARY FIBER FOUND in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Breakthrough scientific discoveries reveal that inulin has excellent nutritional and health benefits to humans. The health benefits of inulin have been confirmed in various experimental and clinical studies, and it is, therefore, being used increasingly in food product formulas. Inulin can be found in a new food supplement, Fibersweet, a unique formulation of Pediapharma - a first to innovate pharmaceutical company. Fibersweet is an aspartame-free sweetener and fiber supplement in one, which contains inulin extracted from the roots of a chicory plant. Fibersweet combines all the benefits of inulin fiber with a sweet bonus of a non-calorie, non-aspartame sugar substitute. Adults need 20-30 grams daily of dietary fiber as RDA to maintain optimum gut health. The average modern diet, which is low in fiber, high in fat and refined sugar, contains only 2-4 grams, much less than the RDA. That's why there is a need for inulin- containing Fibersweet. One sachet contains 4.9 grams of inulin prebiotic fiber. Fibersweet was formulated by Dr. Arturo C. Ludan, a pediatrician whose main interest is clinical nutrition and nutraceuticals. It has a pending patent application with the Intellectual Property Office. Pediapharma Inc also carries its own line of Probiotics from the USA - a multistrain GI Flora/Gastroflora, the well-studied Lactobacillus GG Culturelle and Russian Choice Immune cell wall lysate for cancer patients. Evidence-based clinical studies have shown that specific strains of probiotics have been proven to help control infectious diarrheas, downregulate allergies like atopic dermatitis, reduce inflammation like inflammatory bowel disease and boost the gut immune system.

Clips

New doctor

DR. MARIA CARLA JO M. Rodriguez, graduate of St. Luke's College of Medicine, has passed the recent licensure exams for physicians. Her parents are Jun and Elsie Rodriguez; brothers and sisters are Irene, Bobby, Edrick and Krystel.

Whirlpool Warehouse Sale

WHIRLPOOL HOME APPLIANCES WILL BE holding its regular 2-day Warehouse Sale this March 16-17 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in its warehouses in Quezon City and Cebu. Items on sale are Class B units which are brand new appliances but are slightly dented or scratched. Discounts on selected items can go up to 50 percent. The Warehouse Sale will be held simultaneously in the following addresses: for Metro Manila - #92 Kapiligan Street Quezon City; for Cebu - Lot 3, Block 5 Mandaue North Central Castilex Compound, Cabancalan Road Mandaue City. For further details, contact 712-7073 or 712-2830 for Metro Manila and (032)345-3105, 345-3106 or 345-3109 for Cebu.

2nd Cattle Congress

CATTLE RAISERS FROM THE MAJOR CATTLE-producing provinces will gather in Masbate for the 2nd Cattle Congress on April 17-19. This is a national event in which cattle raisers will take charge of their industry's direction. This event is open to those who are involved in all phases of the industry. On April 17-18 prior to the Congress proper, there will be tours to different ranches to give interested persons a better perspective of ranching operations. Activities of the Congress are National and Local policy assessment, Investor Matching, Market Linkage, Technology Transfer, Trade Fair for products and services, Bull and Heifer Sale. The 6th Brahman Show For sponsorship inquiries, foreign and local congress registration call Randy Favis at 0920-9265411, e-mail randy.favis@gmail.com. For trade fair inquiries, congress registration, tour registration call Maricer Sison (DTI) at 056-3335733 056-3335734 (telefax), e-mail islandtwins0304@yahoo.com.

'Weddings & Beyond' at Cebu

RUSTAN'S PRESENTS WEDDINGS & BEYOND, A total gift registry program designed to commemorate life's most meaningful events and significant milestones in utmost style, with its opulent display of resplendent wedding gowns, dazzling jewelry, and an equally impressive array of the latest cosmetics, toiletries, household furnishings and dozens of innovative gift ideas. Launched last year (July 27 at their flagship store in Makati, Sept. 21 at Rustan's Alabang and Nov. 28 at Rustan's Shangri-La), the service promises to draw even more raves and accolades when it opens at Rustan's Cebu (Shangri-La Mactan) on March 24. The Cebu inaugural launch transforms The Marquee of Shangri-La's Mactan Resort and Spa into a virtual bridal paradise.

Wagi offers summer courses

THE WOMEN AND GENDER INSTITUTE (WAGI) of Miriam College is inviting everyone who wants to experience a memorable and enlightening summer to enroll in any of their summer courses. Gender Fair Education Course, April 16 to 21 (course fee is P5,000); International Women's Human Rights Course, May 7 to 12 (course fee is P6,000); Summer Institute on Migration, May 21 to 26 (course fee is P6,000). All fees are inclusive of course materials, exposure trips, and meals. Interested participants may contact Wagi at 580-54001 to 29 ext. 3590 or 435-9229 or e-mail wagi@mc.edu.ph

Ang Nanay naming Mahal

LIWAYWAY (Liling) MANGAHAS

of Cabanatuan and San Leonardo, N.E.

In peace and grace joined our Lord Father
and her beloved husband ***Tony Mangahas*** (†)
on 14 March 2007 at the age of 75.

We her grieving children – **Jaime** and **Nora, Fr. Antonio (Onet), Fr. Rene, Willy** and **Au, Larcy** and **Ramir, Alvin** and **Ruby, Lalaine** and **Armin**; grandchildren – **James, Jam, Joy, Kris, Donna, Leonard, Holy, Ace, Betina, Vince, Neo, Alexia, Athena, Anthony** – great grandchild **(LJ) Lebron James** – relatives and friends peacefully request the pious readers to implore for the eternal repose of her soul in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at the Mangahas residence in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija.

After the funeral Mass, to be celebrated at the local Parish Catholic Church at 0900 hours Monday, 19 March, our beloved **Nanay** will be buried at the San Leonardo Memorial Park.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

On the fortieth day of joining our Lord,
the family of the late,

DR. JOSE "JOE" MERCADO BEREDO

(29 December 1930 - 5 February 2007)
of San Juan, Batangas and Calamba, Laguna

wish to convey their heartfelt gratitude to our relatives, friends, associates, to others who paid their last respects, sent flowers and offered prayers during our time of sorrow.

Requiem Mass will be held today, March 16, 9:30 a.m. at Divine Mercy Chapel, Brgy. 3, Calamba, Laguna (beside Their Residence).

Aning Rodriquez, Joan, Ton & Maru, Rex & Jenny, Biela, Tommy, Jomari, Angelo, Angelica, Anton, Nina.

On this day, March 16, we remember

Louie R. Prieto

on his 45th birthday.

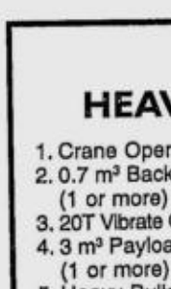
A dutiful son, loving brother, loyal friend and successful entrepreneur.
May we ask relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in prayer.

Masses for Louie's Birthday

1. Our Lady of Lourdes ..... 6:00 a.m.
   Tagaytay City
2. St. Andrew The Apostle Parish ..... 6:30 p.m.
   N. Garcia cor. Kalayaan Ave., Bel-Air II, Makati City
3. St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish ..... 12:15 p.m.
   Magallanes Village, Makati
4. St. John Bosco Parish ..... 7:30 a.m.
   Pasay Road, Makati City
5. Sanctuario de San Antonio ..... 6:00 p.m.
   Forbes Park, Makati City

"I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me will live even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die."
(John 11:25-26)

So Lovingly Remembered
on the 5th Death Anniversary of our beloved



CESAR S. VIRAY

who passed away on to eternal life on March 16, 2002

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass shall be offered at the following churches:

The Parish of the Lord Divine Mercy *Corner Maamo & Madasalin Sts., Sikatuna Village, Q.C.*	*6:00 P.M.*
Parish of the Holy Sacrifice, *UP - Diliman, Q.C.*	*6:00 P.M.*
National Shrine of the Most Holy Rosary, *La Naval de Manila, Sto. Domingo Church*	*6:00 P.M.*
Santisimo Rosario Parish Church, *UST, España*	*6:00 P.M.*
Christ the King of the Universe Parish, *Kingspoint Subd., Novaliches, Q.C.*	*7:00 P.M.*

The family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

CLASSIFIEDS

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS — dti DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **FIL-AM FOODS, INC.** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as Producer of Finished Hogs on a Non-Pioneer Status, as follows:

	Type	Capacity (kilos)	Project Location
Breeder/ Finisher	Expansion	983,149	Brgy. Aranguren and Brgy. Cutcut, Capas, Tarlac
Finisher	New	3,239,758	Brgy. Sto. Rosario, Capas, Tarlac

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department
(PDI–March 16, 2007)

EDC

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL for SECURITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT FIRMS

Education Development Center's (EDC) is requesting proposals from qualified security and risk management firms for its USAID funded project in the Philippines: Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS).

The selected firm will conduct activities that will lead to the development of two core project documents: 1) The Security Operation Plan and; 2) The Security Guidelines and Procedures for all project partners. Some of these activities include a comprehensive in-country security assessment; identification of in-country security and emergency resources, a communications, evacuation, and emergency response plan; development of a security briefing template, and; a crisis response and security training workshop.

The RFP contains all necessary information and can be downloaded from **http://www2.edc.org/glg/SecurityRFP.pdf**; **http://www2.edc.org/glg/Publications.asp** or requested by sending an email to: **securityrfp@edc.org**

Proposals must be submitted electronically to EDC, following instructions in the RFP by **5:00pm Manila time on April 16, 2007**. Selected firms will be contacted, either by telephone or e-mail.

(PDI - March 16, 2007)

CLASSIFIEDS

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4. 3 m³ Payloader Operator (1 or more)
5. Heavy Bulldozer Operator (1 or more)
6. Heavy Dump Truck Operator (5 or more)
7. Mechanical and Heavy Equipment Supervisor (1 or more)
8. Heavy Equipment and Dump Truck Maintenance staff (5 or more)
9. Civil Engineer (2 or more) -with at least 5 years experience in civil works and development in ECO Zone, Industrial park or and Subdivision

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Male (at least 25-45 years of age)
- High School/ College Graduate
- Hardworking
- With a positive outlook towards industry work
- Necessary with experience
- Can speak and understand English

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GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE AND IMAGE MANAGEMENT

The Wilma Cruz-Tapalla Academe of Speech and Personality recently trained the lawyers of Accra Law Office on Business Etiquette and Image Management Feb. 24 at the Penthouse of Accra Law Offices in Makati City. Shown are the participants of the informative training with lawyer Eusebio V. Tan, lawyer Annatess Oracion and WCT Academe managing partner and speaker Valerie Cruz-Tapalla. The WCT Academe also offers summer classes on speech, etiquette and writing for children, teens and adults. For inquiries, call WCT Academe at 723-4118/726-8768 or through Trifocal Media Solutions at 0917-8833023 or e-mail trifocalmedia@gmail.com.

More CLASSIFIED ADS on page...

PSALM B10
DOLE-NCR B10
ZAMELCO B10

Enjoy the dark side of chocolate for a happy heart

COMPARED TO MILK CHOCOlate or white chocolate, dark chocolate isn't exactly top-of-mind for most chocoholics because of its somewhat bitter taste. However, when you consider the tremendous health benefits that dark chocolate gives, you may soon start giving this less celebrated chocolate variant a bit more consideration.

In its report, the American Association for the Advancement of Science says dark chocolate is richest in flavonoids, potent plant compounds that slow down the processing of bad or LDL cholesterol into material that clogs the arteries.

Dark chocolate contains more flavonoids because of the way that it is processed. Milk chocolate, which also has added butterfat, contains fewer flavonoids, while cocoa powder and chocolate syrups are currently processed with a method that removes most of the flavonoids.

In fact, a study by researchers from Scotland's University of Glasgow and Italy's National Institute for Food and Nutrition Research, say that dark chocolate is a useful supplement to a balanced diet but it should not be a substitute for five pieces of fruit and vegetables each day. A small bar of chocolate each day is enough.

To help you realize this requirement, there's Cadbury Gold. The newest of Cadbury's chocolates, Cadbury Gold features the finest blend of dark and milk chocolate coats your mouth with an excellent mix of sweetness and just the right amount of tartness, to have you wanting more.

Borne from a rich and proud chocolate tradition that includes such global favorites like Fruit & Nut and Dairy Milk, Cadbury Gold is poised to become yet another popular addition to the impressive roster of Cadbury products.

Cadbury Gold also comes loaded with generous amounts of tangy fruits, crunchy oven-roasted nuts and crisp wafer pieces to complete a thoroughly blissful chocolate experience guaranteed to bring health and happiness in every bite. Available in strawberry and almond, and apricot and walnut variants, Cadbury Gold truly offers a rich and sinful chocolate experience that is undeniably Cadbury.

So for a health-giving and delicious dark chocolate, opt for Cadbury Gold.

NISSAN GLOBAL MEETS UMC OFFICERS

Top heads of Nissan Global recently met with Universal Motors Corp (UMC) officers to discuss Nissan's expanded business opportunities. Shown are (from left) Toshimitsu Nose, SVP of Siam Nissan Automobile Co Ltd (SNA) and vice president of Nissan Asia Pacific Pte Ltd (NAP), Richard L. Lee, UMC president, Thierry Viadieu, president of SNA and all subsidiary companies in Asean4, Elizabeth H. Lee, UMC SVP for marketing group, and Keiji Shimada, president of NAP.

HCCA holds skills fair at UST College of Nursing

HCCA PHILIPPINES INC, THE LOcal subsidiary of Tennessee-based Health Care Corporation of America International or HCCA, is holding its 2nd Annual Nursing Skills Enhancement Fair for nearly 500 graduating nursing students of the University of Santo Tomas in España, Manila. Labeled "Horizon's 2007, A Nursing Skills Enhancement Fair", the weeklong activity ongoing until March 17 at the UST skills laboratory, is designed to equip graduating students of the UST College of Nursing with additional practical experience and knowledge based on international nursing practices and state-of-the-art patient care technologies. "Horizons program was created by HCCA as a way of giving back to the nursing community," said Joseph Gilinsky, HCCA vice president and managing director for Asia-Pacific and Middle East Regions. "Certainly, we are aware that many of these nurses will use this opportunity to make themselves globally competitive in the work world, but we stress the importance of remaining in the Philippines for at least two years." HCCA international chief nurse and director of international operations Winnie Fritz says, "In the skills fair, senior nursing students of UST get to practice their abilities in six major clinical skills, namely focused assessment, airway management, IV management, tube management, wound and ostomy management, and integration." For more information and sponsorship, call HCCA at 757-1000, or visit the 33/F Tower 1, The Enterprise Centre, 6766 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Working Mom will have a seminar on "Disciplining your Child Based on His Personality" on March 17,2007 from 9am-12nn at ELJ Bldg, QC. Seminar is for FREE, but Pre-registration is a must. For inquiries, please call Enna Santos at 415-2272 loc. 4656.

TeleTech recognized as fastest growing business process outsourcing company

FROM ITS HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AS A small call center with less than 500 employees in 2003 to becoming an 11,000-strong company by February 2007, TeleTech in the Philippines is, by far, the fastest-growing business process outsourcing (BPO) company. This is a fact that was recognized recently by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Business Processing Association of the Philippines and other organizations at the International ICT Awards Manila 2007. The awarding ceremonies were held at the Renaissance Makati City Hotel March 1.

TeleTech's phenomenal and exponential growth rate over the last three years truly deserves commendation. Starting off with one call center in 2003 to eight large BPO centers today across Luzon and the Visayas, TeleTech attributes its remarkable expansion to the skills, the talent, and the support of its employees and valuable partners in government, the academic and business communities. In 2006 alone, TeleTech employed more than 5,000 additional employees to support the growth of its Philippine operations.

TeleTech has mastered the science and the art of recruitment. The process begins with an online portal, www.hirepoint.com, that job applicants can visit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to Hirepoint, TeleTech invests heavily in job fairs, road shows in schools, university partnership programs, and building alliances with government employment agencies. Its innovative sourcing strategies and technology-based tools make TeleTech a true leader and trail-blazer in the BPO industry.

"We are committed to the Filipino people and this honor strengthens this vision," says vice president and general manager Maulik Parekh, who serves on the board of the Business Processing Association of the Philippines (BPAP). "On behalf of the 11,000 employees of the TeleTech organization in the Philippines, we thank the international business community for this recognition," Parekh said.

The award for being the Fastest Growing BPO Company emphasizes the significant contribution to job generation and economic development that a global company like TeleTech brings.

SHOWN, from left, are Scott Sim (executive director, operations), Raj Shergill (site director, Cainta), Robert Cabral (director, language readiness), Me Ann Batallones (director, talent acquisition), Isabel Bales (executive director, human capital delivery), Amy Maltarich (site director, Novaliches), Antoinette Villanueva (site director, Fort Bonifacio), Maulik Parekh (vice president and general manager, Philippine operations), and Christine Matriano (director of communications).

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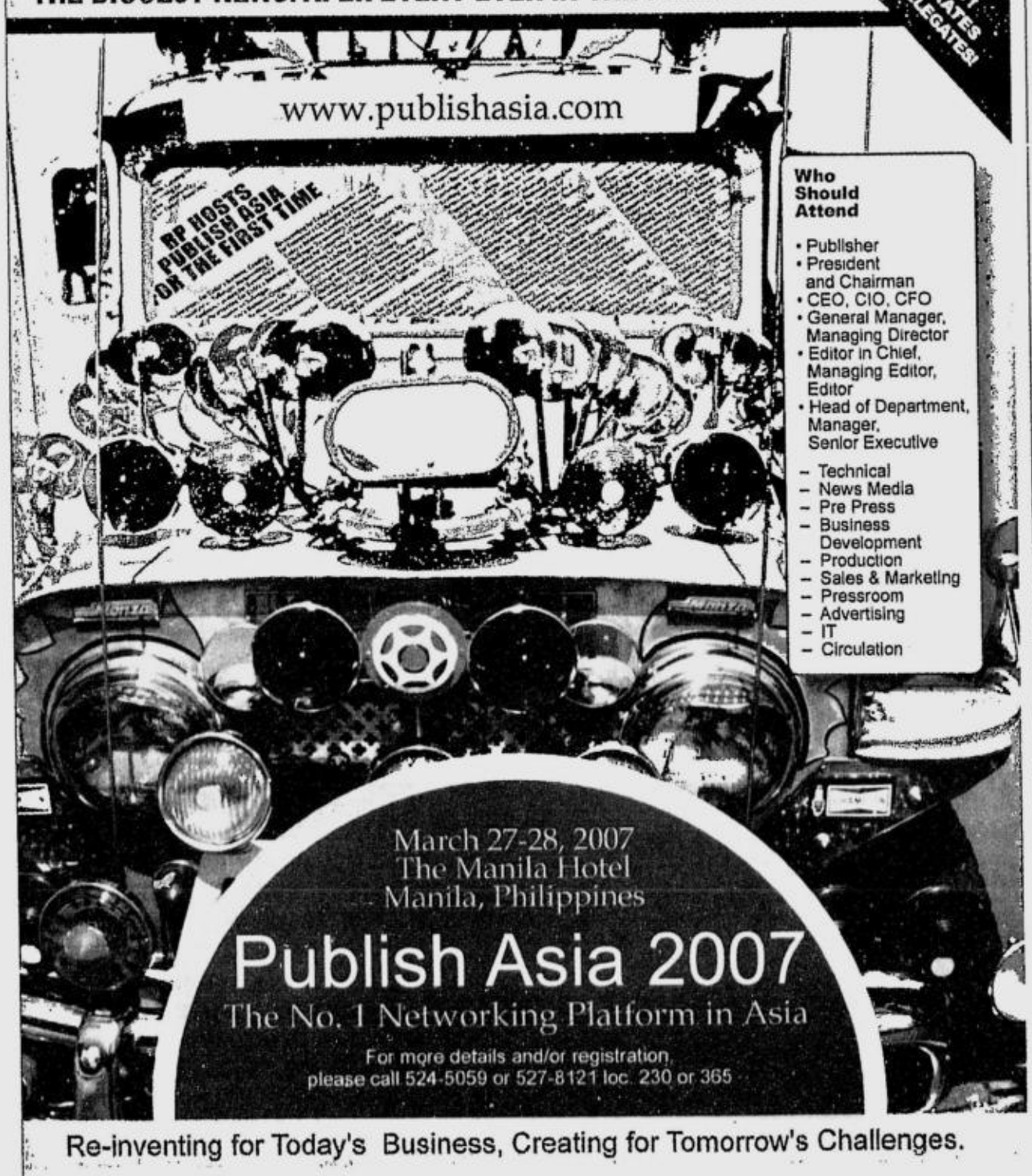

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Conference Programme

Tuesday, 27 March 2007
Welcome Address
Attorney Miguel Varela,President of ManilaBulletin and Chairman Emeritus of the PhilippineChamber of Commerce and Industries, Philippines **Reiner Mittelbach**, *CEO, Ifra, Germany*
Keynote Presentation:Reinventing for Today's Business, Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges
•The monumental challenges facing the newspaper industry today
•Harnessing new technology to re-invent and re-structure
•Continuing to ensure high ethical standards and commitment to quality
***Murdoch MacLennan**, CEO, Telegraph Media Group, United Kingdom*
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Session 1 Business and Strategy
Moderator : David O Valdes, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Philippine Daily Inquirer,Philippines
A Strategy for Integration
•Synergies through coordination and cooperation of business areas•Cross promotional efforts
•Digital strategy: exploiting potential niches via community publications
***David O. Valdes**, Executive Vice President andChief Operating Officer, Philippine Daily Inquirer,Philippines*
Parallel Session 1
Semi-Commercial Printing
Entering the Semi-Commercial Market
•Retro fitting presses
•Practical insights
Moderator: *Manfred Werfel, Research Director and Deputy CEO, Ifra, Germany*
An interactive panel discussion with the publishing community comprising of publishers, industry vendors and end users will be held at the end of the session.
Investment Models - CASH daily
•How the next generation of customers are presenting the media industry with new challenges
•First results after launching a world-premiere cross-media product
•'CASH daily', the information platform for those interested in business.
***Thomas Trueb**, Member of the Group Management,Ringier, Switzerland*
Lunch, Expo Visit
Strategy for Staying Ahead: Product Diversification
•Why it makes sense to widen your portfolio of products
•Attracting new audiences
•Functioning business models
Siddharth Kothari, Director, Rajasthan Patrika, India
Parallel Session 2
Distribution Realities of Asia
Overview of challenges for Distribution and Circulation Management
•What are the options to address these challenges
•How can newspaper industry collectively accelerate transition from where they are today to where they should be
Case study - Magic of Beer Distribution
Panel discussion of Circulation and Distribution
Moderator:**Cyril Pereira**, *Principal, Telesis Consulting Limited,Hong Kong*
A Strategy for Integrated Newsrooms
•Why publishers need to integrate•The challenges to overcome
•The convergence project at The Daily Telegraph
***Dr. Dietmar Schantin**, Director of Newsplex, Ifra, Germany*
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Session 2 Digital Media
Launching a Community Site
•How to develop and market community sites
•Managing communities
•Creating synergies among other news channels
***Chew V. Ming**, Executive Content Producer,STOMP, Singapore Press Holdings, Singapore*
Parallel Session 3
Change Management in the Newsroom
•The situation of change and re-organisation in newsrooms today
•How the success of re-organisation depends on good change management
•Examples of best practice and worst practice of change management in the newsroom
•Methods and tips to help increase acceptance of change
***Sarah Schantin Williams**, Associate Consultant,Ifra Newsplex, Germany*
Search Engines Strategies for Newspapers
•New commercial and editorial arenas opened by search for an online news organization
•What search engines can tell you about your own site and your own readers
•Search engine optimization
***Jo Christian Oterhals**, Head of Development,VG Multimedia, Norway*
Mobile Publishing
•'Made for Mobile' content: How the mobile customer is seeking exclusive differentiated content on his handset
•Moving from a product-centric thought process to a consumer-centric thought process
•Looking through the prism of a newspaper-driven media house
***Saurav Sen**, Head of Business - Telecoms &Internet, ABP Pvt Ltd, India*
Closing Comments of first day
Welcome Dinner
Wednesday, 28 March 2007
Moderator: Jim Chisholm, Joint Principal, iMedia, France
Session 3 Advertising Strategies
Building Across Media Advertising Strategies
•How to structure sales strategy
•Developing packages
•Classifieds strategy
***Jim Chisholm**, Joint Principal, iMedia, France*
Parallel Session 1
Workflow Management -Production, Editorial, Advertising
•Reducing the cost of operations
•Minimizing manpower
•Reducing time to press
•Facilitating the entire operation with integrated solutions
Moderator: *Manfred Werfel, Research Director and DeputyCEO, Ifra, Germany*
An interactive panel discussion with the publishing community comprising of publishers, industry vendors and end users will be held at the end of the session.
Multi-Media Sales Model
•How to create successful sales teams
•Print/online classified strategies
•How to reward staff
***Robert C. Granfeldt**, Vice President Consulting Morris DigitalWorks, USA*
The Google Economy
•How publishers can partner with Google to generate new revenue streams
Speaker to be confirmed
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Online Classifieds- Spaurders.nl
•Launching an online classifieds site in a highly competitive market
•Practical steps on how to develop a site
•Challenges for the future
***Leon Kramer**, Marketing Manager, Spaurders.nl,The Netherlands*
Panel Discussion:Competing for the Advertisers' Budget
•At a time when advertiser across the world are reviewing their marketing strategies, shifting revenues from traditional media and developing new strategies for attracting and retaining consumers, this session examines the views of key decision makers in marketing and outlines how you can increase your share of the advertisers' budget
Speakers to be confirmed
Lunch, Expo Visit
Session 4 Circulation, Readership and Audience
Sessions hosted by **Inma**
The Brand Positioning of The Times of India
•Applying brand management principles to aproduct portfolio
•Capitalizing on a growth market to win market share
***Ravi Dhariwal**, Executive Director, The Times ofIndia, India*
Parallel Session 2
Waste Management
•Key performance indicators for newspapers
•What should be measured and what results can be achieved
Speaker to be confirmed
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Strategy Development of Korea SportsNewpapers - IS
•How IS (sister newspaper of JoongAng Ilbo) worked out operational and restructuring strategies
•Pursued differentiation strategies
***Changhee Park**, Director/Strategic PlanningOffice, JoongAng Ilbo, Seoul, South Korea*
Eyeballs and Audiences: Ideas and TrendsWorldwide
•Tap into the unique "INMA Conversation"worldwide and learn about the best ideas to grow newspaper circulation, readership and audience
•Harvest the best examples of product, price and promotion in this global tour de force presentation
***Earl J. Wilkinson**, Executive Director, INMA, USA*
Closing Summary of the Conference
Asia Media Awards Gala Dinner

Event Activities

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Back by popular requests; take fulladvantage of the **Publish Asia 2007 Golf Tournament** to network with industry leaders head at one of the finest golf courses in Manila on March 29, Thursday.

A **Welcome Dinner reception** will be hosted by Manila Bulletin on the evening of Tuesday 27 March from 18.00hrs onwards. All delegates are invited for a guided plant tour at Manila Bulletin on the same evening.

On Wednesday, 28 March, The Philippine Department of Tourism and the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation hosts a Philippine Cocktails at the Puerta Real in the Old Walled City of Manila, featuring cultural and folk presentations.

The **6th Annual Asia Media Awards Gala Dinner** will also be on **Wednesday, 28 March** at the closing finale of the event. All the evening functions require RSVP. More information will be made available on www.publishasia.com

Please note: Ifra Asia reserves the right to alter the program as necessary. Information provided as accurate as possible at the time of printing. Please check www.publishasia.com for regular program updates.

Women's forum asks: 'Why do men fool around?'

"WHY DO FILIPINO MALES FEEL ENTITLED to fool around at a certain age and what can we do to raise sons who will not feel or do the same?"

This is the question raised in the Women's Forum held Feb. 17 in Greenhills Shopping Center that was organized by the president of Bridges Bookstore Inc, Ma. Teresa Sulpico.

There are two kinds of fooling around; one is when the husband is fooling around just for the heck of it, the other one is when the husband falls in love with the other woman. The latter is more difficult because it often leads to annulment or divorce.

One of the speakers, Dr. Imelda Villar, said that some men feel that they are indeed entitled to fool around because they have sacrificed so much especially if the children are already in college. They think that their children will be spared from the pain if they are already mature enough to understand their parents.

There are also men who fool around not because they feel entitled to but because there is a need that has to be satisfied. But that doesn't mean that they no longer love the wife. It's just that they feel they need someone in life other than their wife.

Of course, if there is a man fooling around, there is also a woman who fools around with them. As the cliché goes, "it takes two to tango". That is why; men are not solely to be blamed for their fooling around.

Asking permission

There are also some times when men do ask permission from their wife to do so. Of course, no wife would be insane to agree unless their marriage is on the brink or they both have extra-marital affairs.

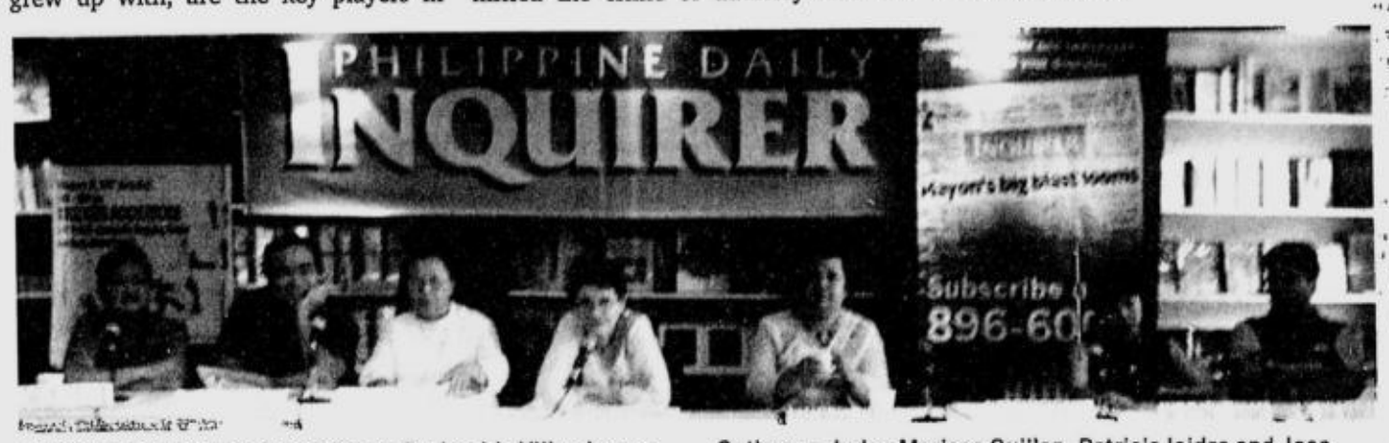
It is not at all fair to say that only men are being unfaithful to the partner. There are also women who do the same, only they hide better than men.

Sometimes it could also be that the practice of polygamy and fooling around is initiated by the father to their son. Thus, the modeling of the father plays an important role in rearing up the son.

The moderator of the event, Dr. Cecille Gutierrez, who was also one of the panelists, said that values taught by parents to their children, their education, as well as the kind of environment the children grew up with, are the key players in molding a son to be a good husband in the future.

According to lawyer Juan Miguel Vazquez, who is a counsel for married women, the Philippines has two infidelity laws based on Republic Act 333 and 334: the consensual sex by a married woman wherein she is said to have committed the crime of adultery and the "bragging rights" of men wherein if a man had another woman other than his wife, he has not committed any crime.

"It is so hard to get an annulment or divorce here in the country. It's a very long and tedious process and that even requires digging up the history of both parties," the lawyer said during the three-hour forum.



SHOWN at the forum, from left, are Dr. Imelda Villar, lawyer Miguel Vazquez, Mo. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, Dr. Cecile Gutierrez, Judge Marissa Guillen, Patricia Isidro and Jose Rodolfo Asis.

Sugar-free diet effective in losing weight

ONE OF THE MOST PREFERRED DIET FADS is Sugar Busters. As the name suggests, it encourages cutting back or eliminating refined sugar and processed grains and concentrating on high fiber vegetables, whole grain, lean meat, fruit and reduced fat dairy.

Creators of this diet would rather refer to it as a nutritional lifestyle that involves knowing what and how to eat, as well as incorporating at least a 20-minute exercise a day, four times a week.

There is no weighing or measuring food in this program. Anyone who wants to lose weight sensibly just has to focus on eating nutritious meals and cutting out sugar, white pasta, white bread, white rice and other sweets.

Walter Sugar Free Wheat Bread by Creative Bakers is appropriate for people who want to cut back on their sugar intake.

Aside from sugar free, Walter Sugar Free Wheat Bread is also high on fiber, which helps to lower blood cholesterol, thus reducing the risk of coronary heart disease, diabetes and colon and rectal cancer. It has no bromate, is cholesterol-free and contains no trans fat. It also has zero sugar and is 97-percent fat free.

Dairy congress, expo 2007

THE DAIRY CONFEDERATION OF THE PHILIPpines (DCP) is the apex organization of all dairy cooperatives, associations and processors in the country. From March 29 to 31 at the Fontana Convention Center in Clarkfield Pampanga, the DCP is once again organizing the Dairy Congress & Expo. The DCP, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, Livestock Development Council, National Dairy Authority and Philippine Carabao Center, is pushing for the development of the dairy industry in the Philippines. Over 1,000 delegates are expected to attend and do their part in uplifting the dairy industry in the country. The Dairy Expo will feature the latest products and services related to the dairy industry. For inquiries, call the project management team Premier Events at 426-9603, 920-8136, 436-4209, or log on to www.dairycongress.com.

Pediatric health care seminar

THE PHILIPPINE ACADEMY OF PEDIATRIC PULmonologists [PAPP] and the Asia Pacific Association of Pediatric Allergy, Respirology and Immunology (Apapari), in coordination with the Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (PSAI), will host the 2007 Asian Regional Conference on Pediatric Respiratory Medicine from March 18 to 21 at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza. This international conference is a scientific gathering of medical practitioners interested in the care of a child with respiratory and allergy problems. Foreign and Filipino experts compose the faculty who will talk about current medical trends in the field of pediatric pulmonology and allergy. Training institutions have prepared instructive cases commonly encountered in clinical practice. Researchers have been invited to present varying researches relevant to the conference. Former DSWD Secretary and an honorary fellow of PAPP Dr Mita Pardo de Tavera delivers the keynote address. For details, call the conference secretariat located at Room 102 GJ Building, 385 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, at 374-7201, or e-mail papp_office@yahoo.com or log on to www.pps.org.ph/links/index_papp.htm.

DSAP, KYTHE, LIFT A HEART GIVE GIFTS

Drugstore Association of the Philippines (DSAP) Central NCR Chapter, in coordination with Kythe Foundation Inc, and Lift A Heart Foundation, conducted a gift-giving activity at the National Children's Hospital in E. Rodriguez, Quezon City Feb. 10. This activity benefited 75 cancer-stricken children. This is only one of the noble undertakings conducted by the association. Non-member drugstore owners are encouraged to join the association. Quezon City or Central NCR drugstore owners can call Ferose M. Moleta at 742-8685, 0916-4403469, Regie S. Salas at 951-5541, or 0921-9869679.

INNOVE SUPPORTS DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Globe/Innove enterprise business group sales head Aries Sayson demonstrates the high-speed wireless Internet connectivity of Globe Visibility to Ronald McDonald during the recent launch of 'Share Mo, Time Mo' project at McDonald's, Greenbelt, Makati City. A joint project of the fast-food chain, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Innove, and IBM Philippines, 'Share Mo, Time Mo' aims to help support DSWD's Registry of Volunteers on Disaster Risk Management and Response by creating a national volunteer database that can be mobilized for disaster operations. The project has installed computer laptops provided by IBM and powered by Innove's Internet access in six strategic McDonald's outlets within Metro Manila.

Outstanding expat Pinoy kids

OUR FELLOW FILIPINOS OVERSEAS TOIL TO ensure a bright future for their offspring. The Bank of the Philippine Islands recognizes the importance of Expat Pinoys. In another effort to cater to the needs of this sector of society, BPI is launching the Search for 10 Outstanding Expat Pinoy Children. Through this endeavor, BPI wishes to instill pride within the expatriate Pinoy children, helping them realize the magnitude of their parents' contribution to the country, but more importantly, to their future. The search holds at stake a cash prize of P50,000. It is open to 15 to 21-year-old children of Expat Pinoys (OFWs) with current contract in another country. They must have parents or relatives who are BPI depositors. Application forms are available for free at all branches of BPI or BPI Family Savings Bank, or may be downloaded from www.bpiexpressonline.com.ph; and www.bpidirect.com.ph). Deadline of submission of forms are on June 30.

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(ZAMCELCO)
Putik, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of CONCRETE POLES on consignment basis, to wit:

No	Quantity	Unit	Item Description
01	200	pcs.	ROUND CENTRIFUGAL PRESTRESSED CONCRETE POLES
			Approved Budget Cost P11,070.00

Specification:
Pole Length : 10.67 m (35 Footer)
Design Load : 500 Kg.

Note: The supplier must have the plant to manufacture concrete poles.

You may secure the Pre-Qualification Requirements from the Office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-Qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 p.m. of March 13, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

Bidding will be conducted on **March 20, 2007**.

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bidds and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of **March 20, 2007**. Five percent (5%) Bidders' Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI - March 16 & 17, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
UNITED KOREAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION INC. Suite 1104 Antel Corporate Center, 121 Valero St., Salcedo Vill., Makati City	Jong Wook Park	Information Manager
ANWELH HOLDINGS, INC. 2079 M.H. Del Pilar St., Malate, Manila	Hamdy Ali Mohamed Ahmed	Overseas Marketing Manager
PABLA LENDING AND TRADING CORP. 8980 Aranga St., San Antonio Village, Makati City	Dilbag Pabla	Operations Manager
GOOD BUSINESS TRADING 1076 Ongpin St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Chuen Yeung Hui	Cashier
UNILEVER PHILIPPINES, INC. 1351 United Nations Ave., Manila	Thabisa Nande Busiswa Mabude	Associate Brand Innovation Manager
GLOBAL POWER SKYNET CORP. 24-B V. Luna Road cor. Mapangakit St., Pinyahan, Quezon City	Donghyun Lim	President
CEBU NUMBER ONE TRAVEL CORP. 3/F Harrison Mansion, F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City	Hee Hyoung Kim	Travel Supervisor
AMBAK TRADING INC. Unit 7, Aurora Arcade, Inter-Neighborhood, Brgy. Holy Spirit, Isidora Hills, Quezon City	Hyun Seung Ko (w/o Noh)	Purchase Manager
IBM BUSINESS SERVICES, INC IBM Plaza Bldg. Cyberone Mall, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City	Kari Holmgeirsson	Pre Auditor
IBM BUSINESS SERVICES, INC. IBM Plaza Bldg. Cyberone Mall, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City	Mikio Kijima	Pre Auditor
DAN-SUNG KC, INC. No. 8B, Jenny's Ave., Rosario, Pasig City	Jonggoo Park	General Manager
SMBC METRO INVESTMENT CORPORATION 20/F Rufino Pacific Tower, 6784 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Satoshi Izumiya	First Vice President
CBC IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING LTD. CO. Rm. 602-A Taytana Plaza, Plaza Lorenzo Ruiz, Binondo, Manila	Yingge Li	Technical Consultant
ALLIED TELESYN PHILIPPINES, INC. 3F Net One Ctr. Bldg., 3rd Ave.cor. 26th St., Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, MM.	Scott Raymond Fowler Gill	Managing Director

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI-March 16, 2007)

PSALM Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (*"PSALM"*) Privatization, Bids and Award Committee (*"The Committee"*) invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the second round of bidding for the privatization of the,

600 MW Masinloc Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant located at Masinloc, Zambales

(the "Asset"). The Asset is being privatized on an "as is where is" basis and will include a power supply allocation.

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest (*"LOI"*) to the PSALM Privatization Bids and Awards Committee (the "*Committee*") which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. All LOIs must be received by the Committee at the PSALM Office with address at 4th Floor Bankmer Building, 6756 Ayala Avenue, Makati City not later than 5:00 p.m. on 12 April 2007, (the *"LOI Submission Deadline"*). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, both in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S.$2,000.00) (the *"Participation Fee"*). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking, and Participation Fee must be received by the Committee on or before 5:00 p.m. on 13 April 2007 to entitle an interested party any further participation in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Package which includes the bidding procedures shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 29 March 2007 until 30 April 2007 (the *"Deadline"*) at the PSALM Office. In accordance with the bidding procedures, only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package by the Deadline or a consortium which includes an interested party will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence : 29 March – 19 July 2007
Pre-bid Conference : 8 May 2007, 2:00 PM at the PSALM Office
Bid Submission Deadline : 26 July 2007, 12:00 noon at the PSALM Office

References to the dates and times shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to nine million U. S. Dollars (U.S.$ 9,000,000.00) in the form of an irrevocable standby letter of credit which must be acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guaranty prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction. The details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Award Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 892-6123 or (632)848-0263, fax number (632) 840-3896 or e-mail address **fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.**

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) **RAPHAEL P. M. LOTILLA**
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – March 15, 16 and 17, 2007)

PSALM starts Masinloc bid process

Supply deals now attached to asset

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES Management Corp. has finally issued the bid invitation for the 600-megawatt (MW) Masinloc coal-fired power plant, seven months after the termination of its asset purchase agreement with YNN Pacific Consortium Inc. for the facility.

PSALM vice president for asset management and electricity trading Froilan Tampinco said the agency was now in the final stages of preparation for the second round of bidding for the Masinloc plant.

Tampinco said PSALM was closely coordinating with National Power Corp. regarding the assignment of power supply deals to the generation asset.

Having supply contracts attached to the asset would entice more bidding participants, he said.

He said PSALM was also reviewing the technical and financial prequalification criteria for interested investors, "to ensure that the government's interest in the auction is adequately protected."

"We remain optimistic that with these developments and with the Philippines' continued fiscal improvement, we will succeed in our effort to sell Masinloc," he said.

"Having already obtained the specific consent of Napocor's major creditors for the Masinloc plant—the Asian Development Bank, Japan Bank for International Cooperation and World Bank—we anticipate a more expeditious sale process," he added.

PSALM was able to successfully bid out the Masinloc plant in 2004, with YNN Pacific emerging as the winning bidder.

The sale bogged down, however, when the winning bidder failed to remit the $227-million downpayment for the plant on Aug. 6, 2006, the deadline set by the government.

Before deadline lapsed, the consortium was able to get Malaysian firm Ranhill Berhad to join the group and come up with the cash to cover the downpayment.

While saying it was ready with the cash for the downpayment, however, Ranhill made a power supply contract with Manila Electric Co. a primary condition for the consummation of the deal.

With Napocor's signing of a transition supply contract with Meralco in November last year, Tampinco expressed confidence that this auction would succeed.

PSALM president Jose Ibazeta earlier said the pre-bid conference for the Masinloc plant would take place in May, with the deadline for the submission of bids likely to be set for July.

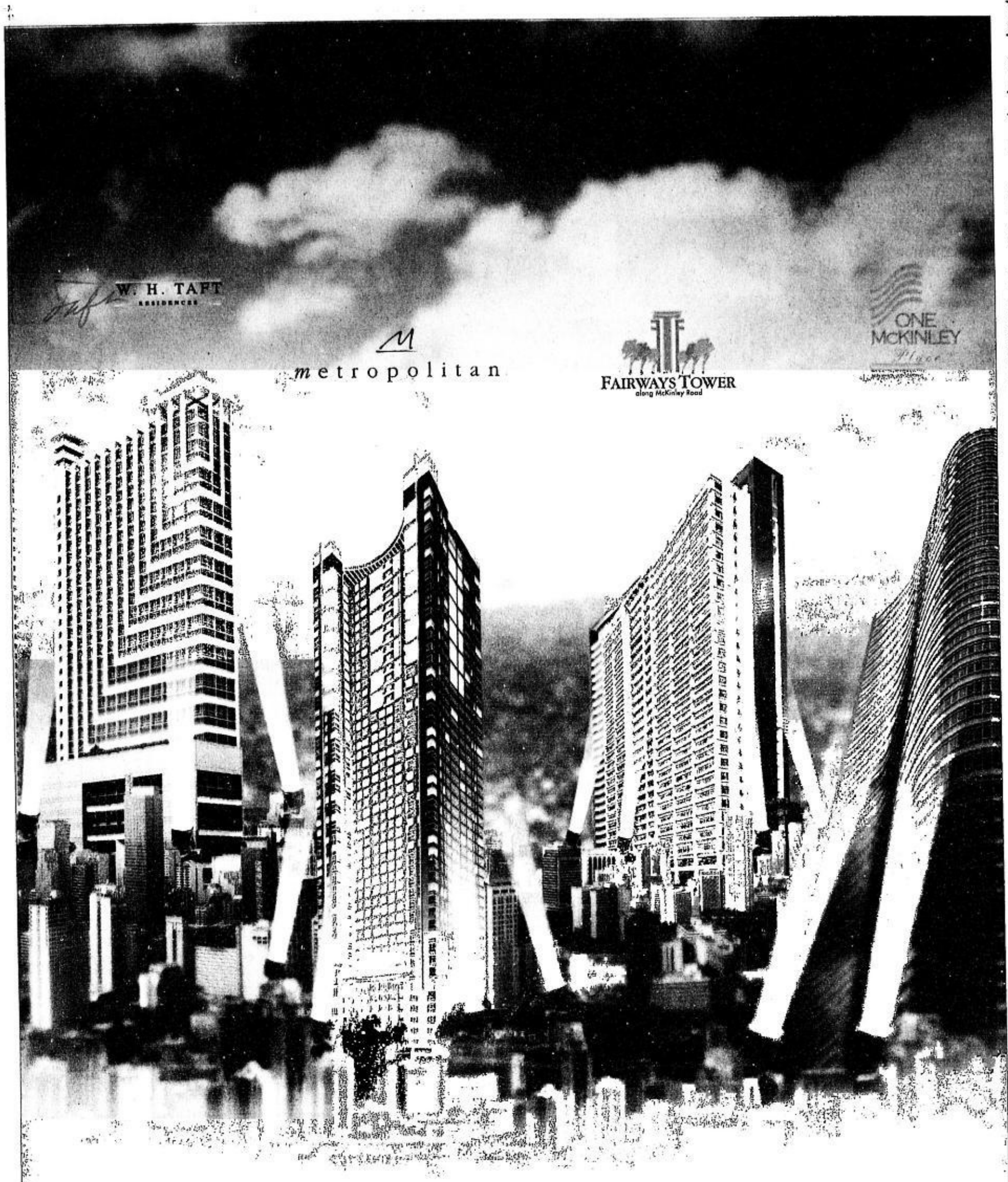
LandBank OKs P200-M term loan for Ceza

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES RE-cently approved a term loan worth P200 million for Cagayan Economic Zone Authority's (Ceza) Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Free Port (CSEZP).

The loan will be used for the rehabilitation and development of Port Irene in Casambalangan Bay, which is envisioned to be the principal seaport in Northeastern Luzon.

The development of CSEZP is LandBank's way of helping Ceza in its goal to prepare Cagayan to be the major gateway for local and international trade in northern Philippines.

The loan agreement was signed by LandBank president and CEO Gilda E. Pico and Ceza administrator Jose Mari B. Ponce.



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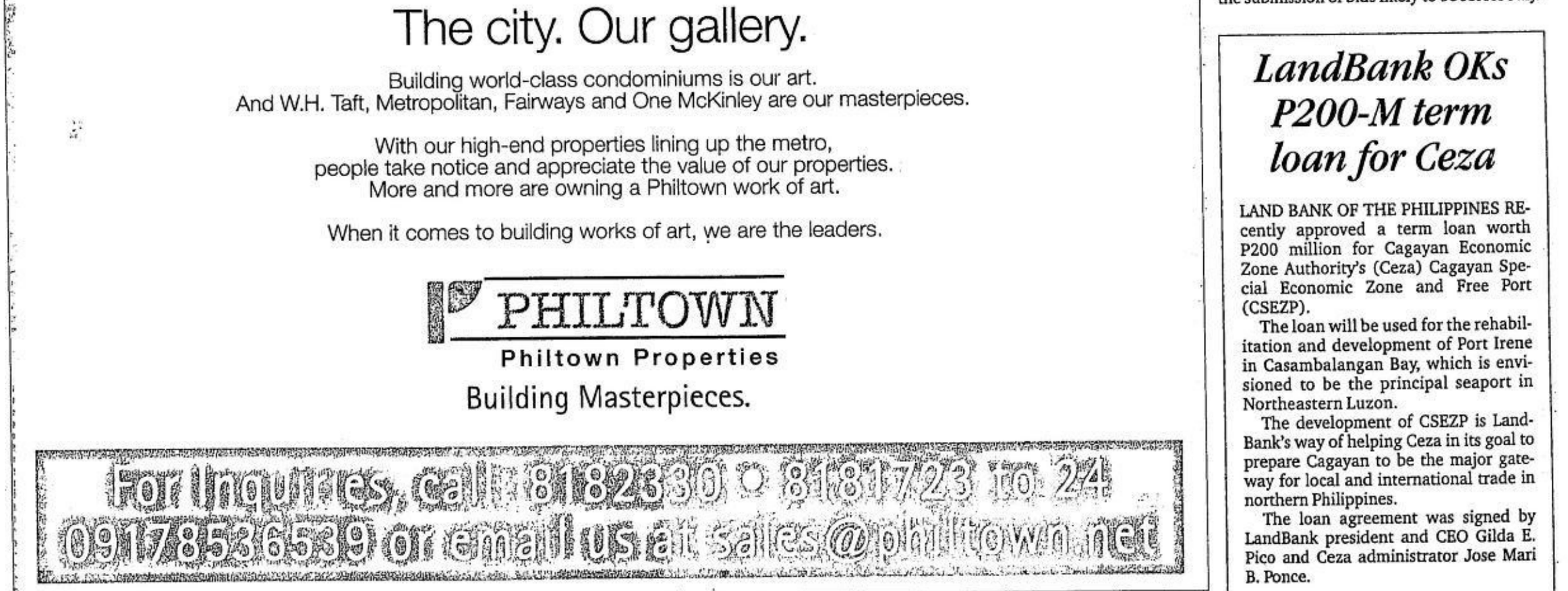

BUSINESS Friday

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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

MINIMALIST look where center of attention are the shoes

You need more than just items on the shelf

Catch consumers' eyes and entice them to buy

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

SIMPLY LEAVING A product on a regular shelf in an outlet or supermarket does not guarantee a sale, no matter how good the product is.

Retail and manufacturing companies know this only too well, which is why they spend considerable time on devising ways and means to catch the consumers' attention and entice them to buy their product over that of their competitors.

One way to attract attention is to make their retail outlets attractive enough to make the potential customers stop, stare and hopefully come in to try and later on buy at least one product.

The need is more felt these days when stores, especially in malls, are so close together that buyers are spoilt for choice.

Retailers only have a few seconds to make an impact, and in order to make that strong impression, many retail and manufacturing companies in the Philippines invest in the look of the store, product visuals and point-of-purchase displays.

Nai Chen Huang, general manager of the Elianto chain in the Philippines, says in an interview that the Malaysia-based cosmetics concept store's primary target market was the youth.

As such, its stores sport white and apple green colors to connote freshness and youth. The colors are also attractive and striking enough to invite the moneyed youth into the stores.

Once they get in, Huang says they are immediately greeted by a colorful display of lipsticks and nail polish, which are among Elianto's best sellers in the Philippines.

To further enhance their experience, customers get to read informative labels beneath each product to explain the ingredients and how best to use them.

These point-of-purchase labels encourage the would-be buyers to try out the products and, if they like them enough, take them to the cashier and pay for them.

Huang says Elianto took time out to prepare information labels because having natural ingredients is one of the top attributes of its cosmetics, aside from being developed to suit tropical skin, which behaves differently from Caucasian skin because it is more moist and sensitive to strong formulations.

Huang says the nice, clean look of the store, coupled with the explosion of colors provided by the cosmetics and the accessories make for higher sales.

Elianto has been in the Philippines for only close to one year, but Huang says there are plans to rapidly expand the store network given the encouraging response from the market.

And he believes that the visuals

YOU NEED/ B2-2

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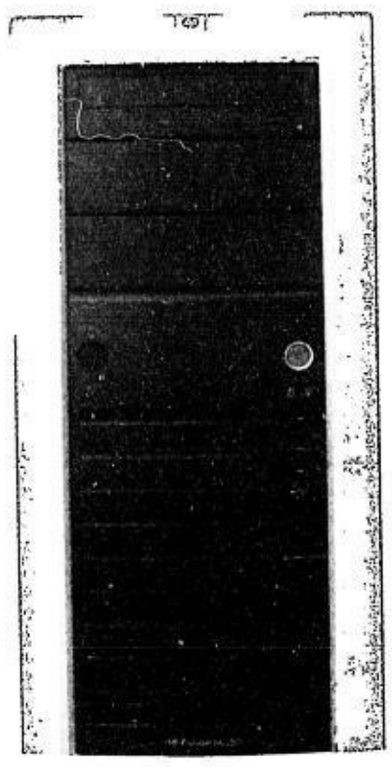

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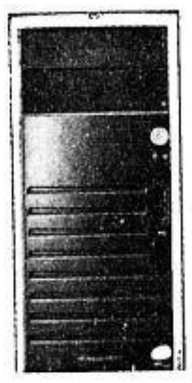

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'Know what you want, develop it, money will follow'

Enterprising spirit brings back young mom's self-respect

By Madonna T. Virola
Inquirer Southern Luzon

TAGAYTAY CITY—IF NOT FOR her enterprising spirit, she would have wallowed in self-pity and become a burden to her family.

"I experienced a high-risk pregnancy and suffered from depression. The best thing that happened to me is that this business brought back my self-esteem. More than the money, I came to know my place under the sun," claims Airees Escueta Rondain, 33, who creates handmade paper products.

Her products include invitations, cards, guest books, missalettes, calendars, journals, scrapbooks and accordion albums.

She even conducts scrap booking workshops.

In a corner of her house, through the web, she transacts business internationally, with an advocacy for the environment and the underprivileged.

At the wedding festival in Olivarez Convention Center, her handicraft booth might not have been as grand as the others but it had a different pull to the heart and conscience.

Starting young

"As young as a grade school pupil, every summer, I'd sell ice candy with sunny orange flavor for 25 cents, then '*sago*' and '*gulaman*' to my playmates and neighbors in a Biñan subdivision," says Airees.

She used her earnings to buy notebooks for school.

In high school, she baked macaroons and cookies after school and sold these in her school in Canossa in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Airees says she got the spirit from her grandmother who pioneered in vending in their place.

Her parents were both teachers.

"I took Computer Science because I wanted to go abroad and earn dollars, not thinking that I would be an entrepreneur," she says. Airees holds an IT degree from De la Salle University.

In her last year in college, her parents initiated putting up a business so they could easily get a visa in order to visit her sister who worked in the United States.

With a capital of P150,000, she put up a computer shop in 1994.

"From there, I learned the business, and how to make it different," says Airees.

She read a lot, citing business stories in the INQUIRER, for competitive advantage.

Hers became the first computer shop in Biñan to offer modern computers in an air-conditioned place with laser printing. The shop evolved into graphic designing and typesetting for printing presses.

Depression

In 2000, her parents went to the US.

Airees decided to get married and gave up the shop although it was netting P40,000 per month.

"I thought I'd just migrate to Manila, get a job, go abroad, but *di pala gano'n lang*."

After marriage, she learned of her high risk pregnancy. She got depressed with being unproductive and confined to the house.

"I'm not the type who'll depend on my husband. So even when my tummy grew big, I studied website design by myself."

While surfing, Airees stumbled upon a Filipino wedding web with free classified ads.

"I posted that I could design an invitation. Somebody inquired. I was glad because it was a trial and the client was a bride to be from Singapore."

After giving birth, she took the invitation to a bridal fair at Hyatt Hotel.

"I just wanted to get out of house. Mine was only a shoe-rack booth which I came to know about from the other invitees," Airees recalls.

Environment-friendly

There, Airees met the niece of a supplier of handmade paper in Salay in Misamis Oriental. "I liked the medium, it was environment-friendly, no tree cutting with *cogon*, *abaca* and *salago* (a kind of grass)."

The suppliers were a group of professionals who wanted to help those displaced in the war in a coastal town in Mindanao. "Being able to help others gave more meaning to what I was doing."

She then got connected with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) and other nongovernment organizations.

Airees started with an order of 100 sheaths. In the past six years, she has been getting orders for thousands of sheaths.

She says the business growth is slow compared to other businesses.

"But I don't want to mass produce. Handmade is unique. Many people still look down on it," Airees says.

Her staff includes an out-of-school neighbor. Her kid's *yaya* gets additional income for helping out. She has trained them to manage the whole business so they can continue with it on their own.

Asked for their product's edge, she says, "The paper quality is printable, I work on a per client basis, I sit down and talk with them. I want to put their personality into the invitation."

Clients abroad

Weekly, her parents would insist that she follow to the US where her handicrafts would be better appreciated and valued.

In fact, 60 percent of her clients here are from the US, Canada, UK and Ireland.

"I'm happy with what I'm earning though not very big, I contribute a significant amount to our total household expenses," Airees claims.

Twice denied of a US visa, she realizes God has other plans for her although she would like to visit her parents and explore opportunities abroad.

Because she could not get a US visa she is angry at the lost opportunities to market Philippine products in the US.

"I want us to be known, not just myself—that Pinoys are very creative, we have the talents, we just lack exposure," Airees says.

When her husband Victorino asked if she was not burdened in her work, she says she was very happy even if it was multitasking at home for her.

"I don't see myself working from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in an office. I'm adventurous, I'm excited when doing new things," she says passionately.

When people appreciate and see the value of what you are doing, they are willing to pay!" she says in her ever passionate tone.

Airees' is a volunteer consultant at PBSP and when asked what business is good, "Know what you want to do in life, you develop it and money will follow."

She believes that creativity is in each one but it is lost as one grows older. She puts premium on cognitive intelligence.

"For me, we really have to promote entrepreneurship more than the arts because it is the moving force of our economy," says Airees, who vowed to teach her kids, Vcoy and Loui, the value of entrepreneurship at their young ages. *(Visit www.handcraftedexpressions.com or call 049-5118479.)*

THESE handicrafts are environment-friendly and help communities displaced by war in Mindanao. PHOTOS BY MADONNA T. VIROLA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

AIREES Escueta Rondain, 33, shows that handicrafts where she found self-expression, livelihood and service.

ELIANTO stores sport white and apple green colors to connote freshness and youth.

You need more than . . .

From page B2-1

is a reason behind the brisk sales.

Muted walls and displays

Geronimo Begre, who heads the All Flip-Flops chain, which sells purely Havaianas footwear, is another believer in the selling power of a visuals and product display.

In terms of design philosophy, Begre says the idea was to give attention to the colorful Havaianas slippers, thus the colors of the walls and the display cases are muted to make sure they do not clash with the slippers.

But there are drop lights and dedicated display cases to literally put the slippers under the best light, and encourage passers-by to go into the store and then leave with at least one pair of Havaianas slippers.

The first All Flip-Flops store was set up in August 2005 in the Glorietta mall in Makati City, and Begre says the look of the stores has evolved as the chain expanded to the current four.

"We have to evolve because we always say that our slippers is a fashion item, not a sports item. It is part of daily fashion because they are already accepted in restaurants," Begre explains.

Begre says All Flip-Flops shied away from installing large point-of-purchase displays on specific items because he believed that the Havaianas slippers could sell themselves.

"What we do is to switch displays around the different stores so that there is always something new to offer customers in each store," Begre says.

He says the formula has worked well enough to the point that retailers from other countries have visited the All Flip-Flops store to see how to sell just slippers and survive in the cutthroat retail industry.

"We are the first in the world to have an all-Havaianas store," Begre says, "even Brazil does not have one, that's why they are curious about how we're doing and we're doing well."

Function and design

Fila, on the other hand, is clearly a sports brand, but it is also straddling the line of fashion.

In keeping with its Italian tradition, Fila stores in the country marry function and design.

Gone are the days when putting up a store was a simple affair. Cris Albert, head of Fila in the Philippines, says these days stores must stand out to seize the imagination of the buyers.

For the Philippines, Fila went for a minimalist look where the center of attention are the shoes.

"The brand is everything to a company like Fila, that's why we emphasize the brand on our 150 stores nationwide," Albert says.

She adds that the visuals were installed with the customer in mind, which explains the large posters of the latest shoe designs, to enhance the store's appeal.

Albert says instilling brand consciousness is even more important in the Philippines where the people are extra brand conscious.

"National brands are deeply rooted in the Filipino psyche. That's why they tend to be loyal to their favored brands," Albert says.

And Fila in the Philippines champions the brand in a big way through crowd stopping store designs and visuals.

Going green can pay off in the home

AMSTERDAM—VIRTUE IS SUPposed to be its own reward. But Londoner Mike Butcher has found it makes him money too.

The digital media consultant and father of two replaced the 15 power-hungry incandescent bulbs in his home with low-energy ones that use one-sixth of the power and a fraction of the cost.

"I'm just an ordinary guy, and it seemed like a no-brainer to me, an easy thing to do," he said.

"Not only does it make sense from a green perspective, it also saves us money." With electricity prices up sharply to around 11 pence ($0.212) per kilowatt/hour in Britain and 20 euro cents ($0.263) per kWh in mainland Europe, running 15 old-fashioned hot bulbs costs the average household 200 euros per year, a figure which can be cut by 150 euros or more.

"When I called the electricity company, they told me how surprised they were about my low energy bill," Butcher said.

Political leaders and bulb makers last week urged the European Union to come up with plans to boost the popularity of energy-saving lighting, but despite high import tariffs it already makes financial sense.

Energy-saving bulbs, which have a fluorescent tube rather than a filament, can be bought in most European countries for less than two euros apiece, compared with up to 20 euros 10 years ago. And they last up to five times longer than old-fashioned bulbs.

"You're stealing from your own wallet if you don't buy these energy-saving lamps," said Henry de Gooijer, a project manager and consultant at Ecostream in the Netherlands.

Climate change bill

The British government published a climate change bill on Tuesday setting targets for carbon dioxide emission cuts which could make the country the first to limit greenhouse gases by law. Part of the plan is to phase out high-energy bulbs.

Producers estimate that around 2.1 billion energy-inefficient bulbs are sold every year, mainly for homes, and around 3.6 billion are in use.

If Europeans cut the energy consumed by home lighting by just 50 percent, they could save approximately 23 megatons of CO_2, equal to the output of 27 power plants and electricity costs of 7 billion euros.

Butcher dismissed complaints that low-energy bulbs are dimmer. "My wife had to get used to the fact that when you switch them on, they're not as bright right away. But after 60 seconds or so they're as bright as a normal bulb," he said.

But as one technology reduces carbon emissions, others are still pushing them up. Electricity consumption is rising 2-3 percent a year in most European countries, driven by new appliances like computers, set-top boxes, electric toothbrushes, mobile phones and kitchen appliances.

Many are left on standby. Set-top boxes left switched on, for instance, can consume as much as 60 watts per hour.

Cable company Liberty Global said it was working with producers to solve the problem.

"We're discussing with our vendors the next generation of set-top boxes that would consume significantly less power," said a spokesperson for Europe's top cable company.

Britain said it would try to persuade the European Union to ban wasteful devices like standby switches. *Reuters*

Ensuring medical tourism goes beyond bringing tourists in

TAKING PART IN THE MEDICAL tourism efforts of the government, the Philippine Retirement Industry and the Philippine Retirement Agency is no easy task, but it is something businessman Arsenio T. Ng has not only invested in, but put hundreds of planning and work hours into.

With New Life/Joaquino Aesthetics, a team of board-certified plastic surgeons headed by Dr. James Joaquino, he set up Managed Care, an ambulatory care facility in the metro, which offers what tourists and *balikbayans* expect from professional medical facilities they travel several thousand miles to put their hard-earned income into.

"It's not as simple as building a big brand and promoting it overseas. This has to be backed up with a credible team and a reliable and globally-competitive facility," says Ng.

He put up the capital to construct and equip a facility with a full line of medical and dental consultants, up-to-date diagnostic equipment, a complete laboratory, 14 operating rooms for general, ophthalmology and plastic surgery procedures, a spacious recovery area, a 24-hour recovery suite, and its own ambulance units.

This set-up is completed by a plastic surgery team with the professional experience, skill and reputation obtained from at least four years of general surgery, and three years more of training and practice in reconstructive and cosmetic procedures. "The promises we make when we promote our country as a hub for medical tourists should be fully supported. Will patients travel all the way to another country for the quality care and professionalism they have heard of only to find that there is also a long wait because clinics are not equipped for their large group, or just to be presented with some less-than-standard operating rooms or even worse, end up with botched work? More than building it as a business, we in the industry need to work on maintaining and upgrading our standards and protecting the reputation of Fil-

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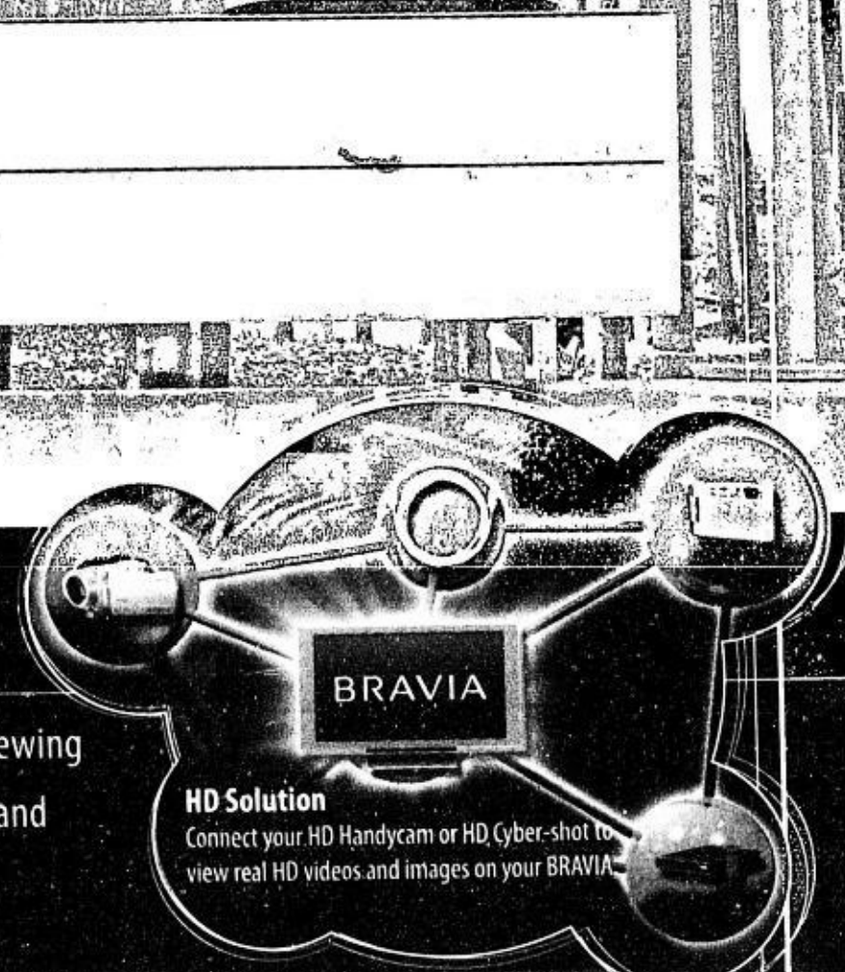

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No: 0666 Series of 2007

POWER OF REPUTATION

It's not always what you are, but how you're perceived

By Romeo P. Virtusio
Contributor

REPUTATION IS THE WAY YOU ARE seen by the market; in business it is not even entirely what you are, but the way you are perceived. This is what makes the management of reputation extremely important.

No one gets to know who you are when you keep to ourselves. It was not until Jollibee began winning regional and international awards for excellent performance that the fast-food chain and its founder, Tony Tan Caktiong, acquires its reputation—a world-class Filipino firm that has transcended its humble beginnings and growing pains, through quality products, highly effective organization that respects and unstintingly serves its customers. Until it raised its voice above *langhap-sarap* and harnessed all its positive values, little victories, and its long struggle for leadership—and being Filipino—in one long sustained drive, it would have stayed a big successful company, but without a vivid story, a unique character, and a strong reputation.

Winning respect

A corporation wins respect via excellence in its main business—product and service, but that is just the starting point. A corporation has to keep on enhancing its reputation. There are a number of ways a corporation can do it:

1. Excel in corporate governance. The demands on business and on its readiness to obey the laws of the land willingly—without need for government or stakeholders to seek legal enforcement of its obligations—are growing daily. Government, stockholders, the community, NGOs and media will be even more aggressive in seeing to it that a corporation operates according to law, and to the satisfaction of those who have stake in it. A corporation cannot build a reputation on shallow foundations.

2. Keep helping others—your community, society and the country, but be more imaginative, be more long-term in vision, planning and resource-allocation in choosing your projects. Seek now to build alliances with other corporations and organizations to address the big needs of the country, with larger funds and resources, and more judicious planning. Reapply perhaps the PBSP (Philippine Business for Social Progress) model, which highlights the advantage of size created by a strong alliance and the benefits of diverse but disciplined work.

3. Teach others by example. Show other corporations how you have done well in your main business and what you are doing to fulfill your corporate social responsibility. In other words, use judicious and good-taste PR to share with others your experience in business and in CSR. This may earn you good copy and awards as you go along, but these should be welcome, for these will give you the kind of authority that you will need to keep multiplying the results of your experience.

4. Strengthen the concept of reputation as a part of your culture. Teach your people the value of good reputation as a good thing in itself but also as an imperative. Good reputation—the kind that is won over a long time by exemplary work—multiplies the business and helps assure you of a loyal market. Reputation, which is another name for *pangalan* or *karangalan*, is a most precious asset. Live as nobly, i.e., according to the high standards of your business and those of fair play and social responsibility, as you can, to inculcate the ideal of good reputation. Over time, your organization will understand that good reputation is part of the engine that will give you continued strength, growth and enduring viability.

Charles J. Fombrun ("Realizing Value from the Corporate Image") sees a competitive advantage in the asset called reputation: "A company with a large reputational capital actually gains a competitive advantage against rivals because its reputation enables it to charge premium prices for its products, to achieve lower marketing costs, and to benefit from greater freedom in decision-making. In other words, reputation building is a form of 'enlightened self-interest.'"

A defense

A corporation with a good reputation wields something that its products may not be able to give it all the time: A defense against being maligned or against baseless accusations. Jollibee, in its early years, used to be bugged by complaints on quality of its products; now, could anyone imagine that Jollibee does not have the discipline, the resources, or experience, to ensure that all the product it offers are of good, even, excellent quality?

Maintain reputation, first by being true to what you have won it for in the first place: Giving your best as an organization, offering your best product or service day in, day out. Companies with reputation are rich with stories of the extra-mile, of employees going beyond the call of duty in fulfilling commitments to customers. Betraying one or two customers with poor service may be forgivable, but deliberate neglect, dishonesty, chicanery are fatal to one's reputation, and to the business.

Chart out a program

Then, chart out a reputation management program. What you put in it depends on who you are, your product or service, or your vision. Your objective will be to keep your corporation worthy of the trust, patronage and respect of your constituencies. Enlist the voice and prestige of the CEO to communicate the vision of the corporation and get him to marshal the entire organization to keep this vision alive through a program—a facile, not frenetic kind of program—of corporate presentations.

Awards per se, for instance, do not mean much; they had better be given by organizations that themselves have the know-how and the prestige that make the awards believable and inspiring. Quantity of exposure went out of fashion a long time ago. Exposure has to be relevant, thoughtful and targeted.

Pay priority attention to ethical conduct. A corporation has no valid and credible vision without commitment to ethics. There is no reputation to be built in a corporation that is not animated by vision and is not tempered and held in place by ethical conduct. Commitment to what is good, right, lawful and proper must suffuse the entire organization. Some of the saddest chapters in US business, for instance, have been written in the last 10 years—those on the downfall of corporate leaders who were misled and who misled others, who, dazzled by huge amounts of ill-gotten money, threw away reputation, theirs and their employers.

Zealous

The corporation has to be zealous in defending itself against attacks on its reputation. A free society often makes the corporation helpless against unfounded attacks. The CEO must be primed up to come to the defense of the corporation and never hope that it will be immune to attack. His mode of defense must be measured, reasoned, and clear, but fast. Knowledge of issues management, regional and global relationships, meaningful corporate social responsibility and commitment to ethics and positive values will help enhance and defend corporate reputation.

(The author is chair of Virtusio Public Relations Inc., and Context Communications International Inc. He is former national chair of the Ipra Philippine chapter. Ipra is an international organization for communications professionals, with some 1,000 senior PR practitioners in 196 countries.)

Showing how ravaged residents rebuilt lives wins award for firm

A VIDEO SHOWING HOW THE RESIDENTS of a typhoon-ravaged fishing village learned to sculpt and rebuild their lives through their works won for Smart Communications the second highest honors in the recent 42nd Anvil Awards. Smart commissioned sculptor Rey Paz Contreras to teach villagers of Banglos, Quezon, how to turn driftwood into art pieces, which Smart also helps to market.

Titled "Carving a New Life from Tragedy," the video was one of five entries Smart submitted on its first participation in the annual competition organized by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP). All five entries won.

Chief Justice Reynato Puno, chairman of this year's board of judges, handed out the awards, assisted by PRSP president Milen de Quiros, VP-internal affairs Ed Alcaraz, and Butch Raquel, chairman of this year's Anvil Awards.

Accepting the awards for Smart were public affairs head Ramon R. Isberto, human resources development and management head Annette Santiago, and public affairs senior manager Darwin Flores. The ceremonies were held at the Hotel Intercontinental.

The Banglos video also received an Award of Excellence, along with two other entries, "Project Nakar" and "Broadbanding Education: SWEEP and Smart Schools." The former refers to Smart's sustainable livelihood program in Nakar, Quezon, where it also built houses in partnership with Gawad Kalinga; while the latter refers to Smart's initiatives in harnessing technology to help upgrade students' training and teachers' capabilities.

Under SWEEP, or Smart Wireless Electronics Engineering Program, 40 colleges and universities offering electronics and communications engineering (ECE) are able to supplement classroom training with virtual on-the-job training, using radio base station facilities donated by Smart. Through its sister program, Smart Schools, teachers in 100 public high schools are trained in information and communication technology (ICT); they now download supplemental teaching material from websites and give lessons using Power Point presentations as visual aids.

Smart also won the Award of Merit for its employee magazine, SmartSpeak Quarterly, and its Employee Volunteerism Program. The latter was inspired by the initiative of the employees who have been planting trees, donating blood, tutoring elementary pupils, raising funds and building houses.

The Anvil Awards, dubbed the Oscars of public relations, are given to PR groups that demonstrate "integrity, excellence and concern for the public interest in their programs and tools," said Chief Justice Puno. This year the awards committee received 178 entries; 21 won excellence awards and 42, merit awards. The distinguished board of judges included 15 PR practitioners across industries, as well as company CEOs and academicians.

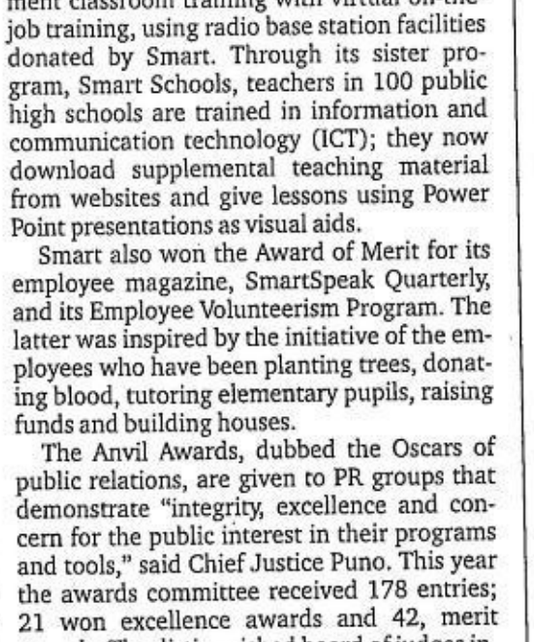
Ensuring medical ...

From page B2-2

ipino medical professionals," stresses Dr. Joaquino, a known proponent of proper education and safety of patients.

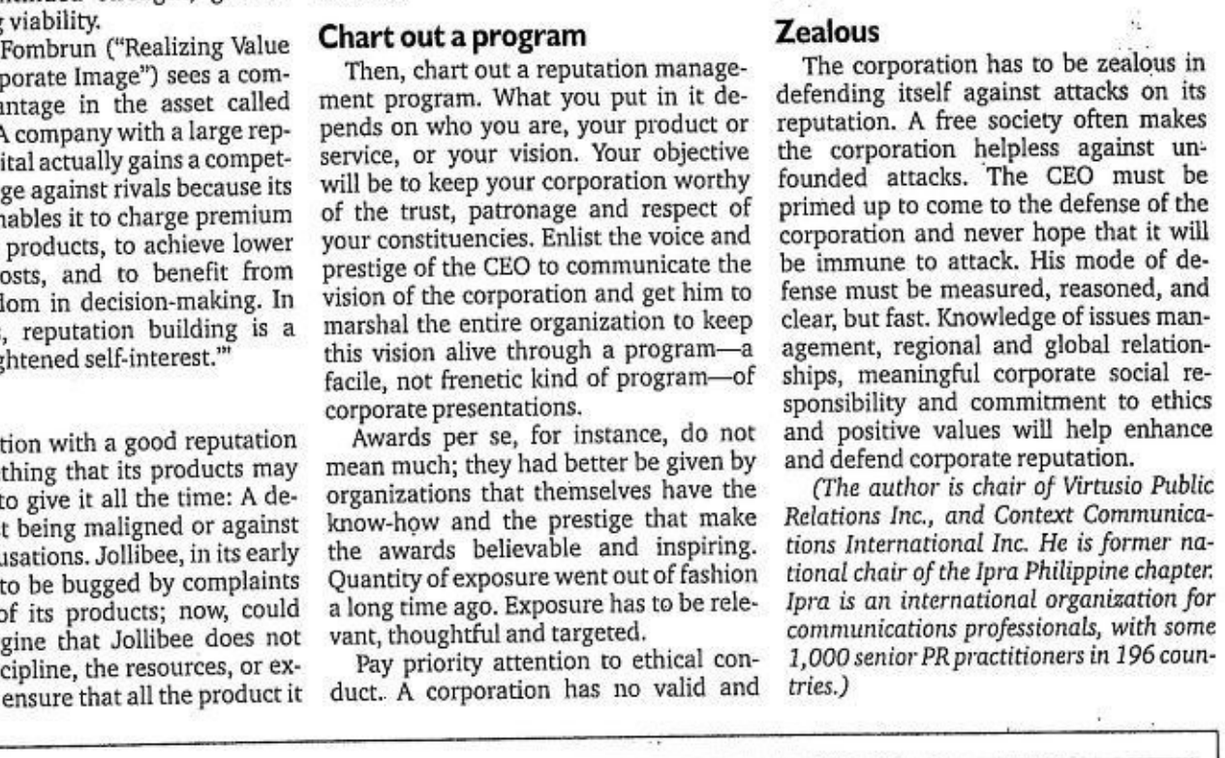
That the facility is located in Summit One Tower, 530 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong, not far from resort hotels in the Ortigas Center and Makati Central Business District, is an advantage they are quick to point out. "Some people just can't help associating hospitals with sickness and pain, and there is always the risk of contracting an infection. Most of the procedures required do not need more than a few hours' stay for post-op recovery and monitoring, and patients need not go so far for their follow-up visits," Joaquino points out.

Managed Care is a result of the efforts Ng put into thoroughly studying the concept and concerns Americans, Europeans and some Asians have about medical care and traveling as tourists, as well as his work team-up with medical and travel professionals. "We as a team know what they need and what they are used to. Our answer is not only in giving them value for their money, but in making sure they go back home liking how they feel and how they look," Ng says, adding, "As an entrepreneur, I am aware of the balance between intuition and expertise to minimize the risks. The challenge is developing a system where all our areas are defined, developed fully and operate together smoothly. From that point, what we have to do is continue to find new avenues to ensure all our strengths are directed towards something more to offer our consumers, both current and potential," he shares.



DR. JAMES Joaquino

To illustrate, he reveals how his background and foothold in digital communications (Information Technology) is enabling the facility to take the entire industry a notch higher. This summer, Managed Care will launch a portal for real-time between their medical professionals and the public, from various partner establishments through the Internet.



FRIENDS Richelle See and Chery Manadlang

AS THE OLD CLICHÉ GOES, WHEN opportunity knocks, answer it.

That's what close friends Richelle See and Chery Manadlang did when they traded their respective office jobs for teaching posts in a preschool which they jointly owned.

Almost two years ago, See and Manadlang shelled out P1.5 million from their respective savings to open The Brick's Place Pre-School inside New Manila in Quezon City. Now running on its second year and with 24 kids enrolled in, the partners expect to break-even in terms of earnings.

"Putting up a school is really financially challenging. There are a lot of risks involved. Fortunately, we are able to keep our heads above the water," says the 34-year-old See.

It is Manadlang who keep tabs of the school's financial operations being its chief financial officer. Their monthly expenses, she says, amount to P100,000 excluding the P5,000 budget each of them sometimes spend to buy materials for the school.

"We buy educational toys and manipulatives to teach certain concepts to the kids. These materials, sometimes, we can only buy in the United States, Singapore and Hong Kong," narrates the 32-year-old Manadlang. "Whenever we are on a vacation, we make it a point to shop for new materials," she adds.

The Brick's Place currently employs three teachers, two assistants, a caretaker and one office secretary.

"It's a misconception that running a pre-school is one of the most lucrative businesses. *Hindi totoo yun*," quips See.

So why are they in this business?

"More than the earnings, it is a vocation for us," says Manadlang. Her goal, which she shares with See, is to expand progressive teaching to children.

"We have a certain approach, our own philosophy. We are not only here to attend to the kids' educational advancement but their emotional stability as well," notes See.

Both See and Manadlang have mastered the so-called progressive teaching before they decided to put up their own school.

Manadlang left their Baguio-based family business to attend a seminar at the Waldorf School in Manila, which eventually got her into teaching 3- to 4-year old kids.

After that short stint, she went to ABS-CBN Learning Center but didn't stay long. Soon after, she pioneered the Bright Minds School along Kamias. She then went on to join Psycchpros, a diagnostic center for intervention reading, and became a full-pledged pre-school progressive teacher at Apples & Oranges, where she met See.

See, for her part, did not immediately give in to her calling after she graduated from University of Santo Tomas with a degree in literature.

"I've always wanted to teach literature *pero sa bata ako napunta*," she quips. But before formally dealing with kids, See worked for over two years in a five-star hotel in Manila. When she got out of that job, she earned her first taste in teaching at the First Steps to Learning, where she first served as an assistant teacher. After four years, she was handling her own classes.

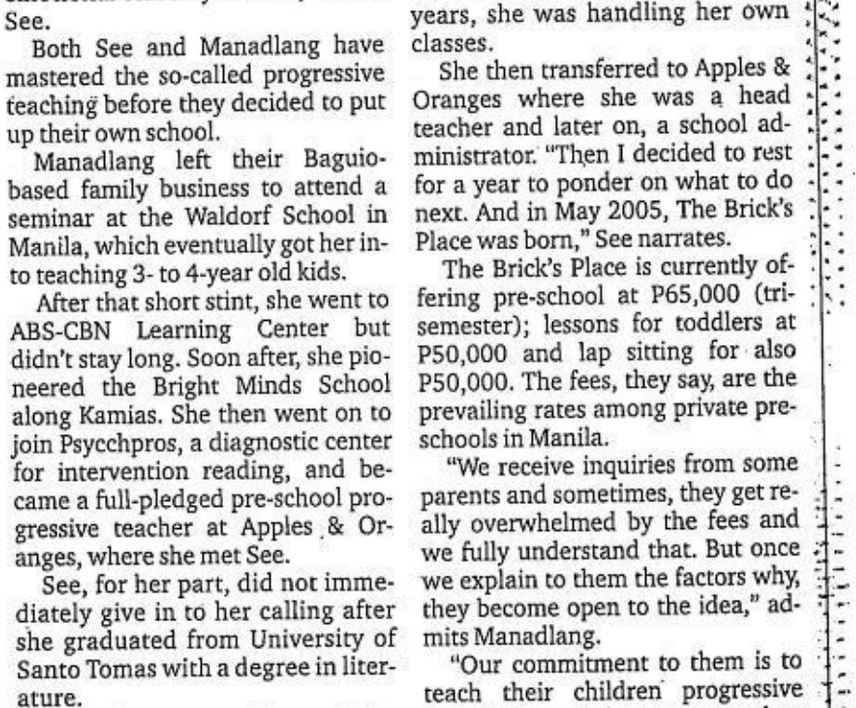
She then transferred to Apples & Oranges where she was a head teacher and later on, a school administrator. "Then I decided to rest for a year to ponder on what to do next. And in May 2005, The Brick's Place was born," See narrates.

The Brick's Place is currently offering pre-school at P65,000 (trisemester); lessons for toddlers at P50,000 and lap sitting for also P50,000. The fees, they say, are the prevailing rates among private pre-schools in Manila.

"We receive inquiries from some parents and sometimes, they get really overwhelmed by the fees and we fully understand that. But once we explain to them the factors why, they become open to the idea," admits Manadlang.

"Our commitment to them is to teach their children progressive knowledge and the proper conduct when dealing with family, friends and the society," notes See.

Now, who will say that running a pre-school is an easy job?



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No: 0666 Series of 2007.

Getting buyers' attention in digital world

'You can decide what you want to watch and when to watch it'

By Marlet D. Salazar

AEGIS MEDIA MEDIA REGIONAL CEO Patrick Stahle believes that digital media is fast gaining momentum in many countries in Asia.

Advertising, for one, is no longer confined to the traditional broadcast and print. Earlier online reports state that ad spending in digital advertising is increasing every year. By digital, it means not only online advertising but it also includes other segments like display, search, rich media, DVR, in-game, and mobile.

Stahle was in the country recently to discuss business expansion opportunities. He met with Jocelyn Domingo and Tom Banguis Jr. of media companies Carat and Mediaforce Vizeum.

"The Philippines is a gemstone for our company as we have a lot of clients here," Stahle said.

"It is a very interesting market because we can see that we can enforce our digital capabilities here," he added.

Aegis is looking at increasing different capabilities which include Internet and mobile planning.

The sudden surge of interest in digital advertising is prompted by the rapid changes and improvement of digital technology in the world. As a result of this, the lifestyle and mind-set of consumers naturally move toward the same direction.

Mobile TV has recently been introduced in the country (even if in South Korea it is already old news). Although conventional television still rules in a third world country like ours, it is anticipated that sooner or later mobile TV will soon dominate the digital life of consumers.

Stahle noted that even with a slower connection here which makes it harder for lower-income class to have access to Internet, it is compensated by the speedy growth of mobile communications.

"With the combination of 3G and mobile transaction you can actually become on the forefront," he said.

"Over the years, advertising agencies have been working together with media owners. They carry the products or brands and the consumers can opt to buy or not to buy. Consumers won't be able to pay the full price of a newspaper or a TV slot and in a way it is subsidized by advertisers.

"But since digital media evolved, that global triangle is experiencing a shift.

It depends on how you go through the minds of people."

In a multi-tasking world, it is getting more difficult to get the attention of consumers who are gradually getting control of communication.

The dilemma here is consumers can actually block the commercials. That is the challenge advertising agencies and companies will have to face.

"You find the most important touch points of the consumer and you add media to create the interest," Stahle said, who assumed the CEO position in 2006.

Big media companies are consolidating their services trying to bundle an offer that becomes less vulnerable to the apparent change in advertising. On the other hand, agencies are looking and finding new ways in creating a business model and how they will execute it to adapt to the increasing change.

In the Philippines, television still carries the larger chunk of advertising. But according to Stahle, in other mature markets in Europe, "TV is down in less than 30 percent of the media expenditures."

If IT television or Internet TV gets widely distributed in the future, that means consumers can get the whole thing work their own way.

"You can decide what you want and when to watch the shows that you pay for," Stahle said. "Instead of having 15 channels you can have 2,000."

Stahle said that from the marketing and advertising perspective the Asian market is general moving toward modern advertising.

PATRICK Stahle

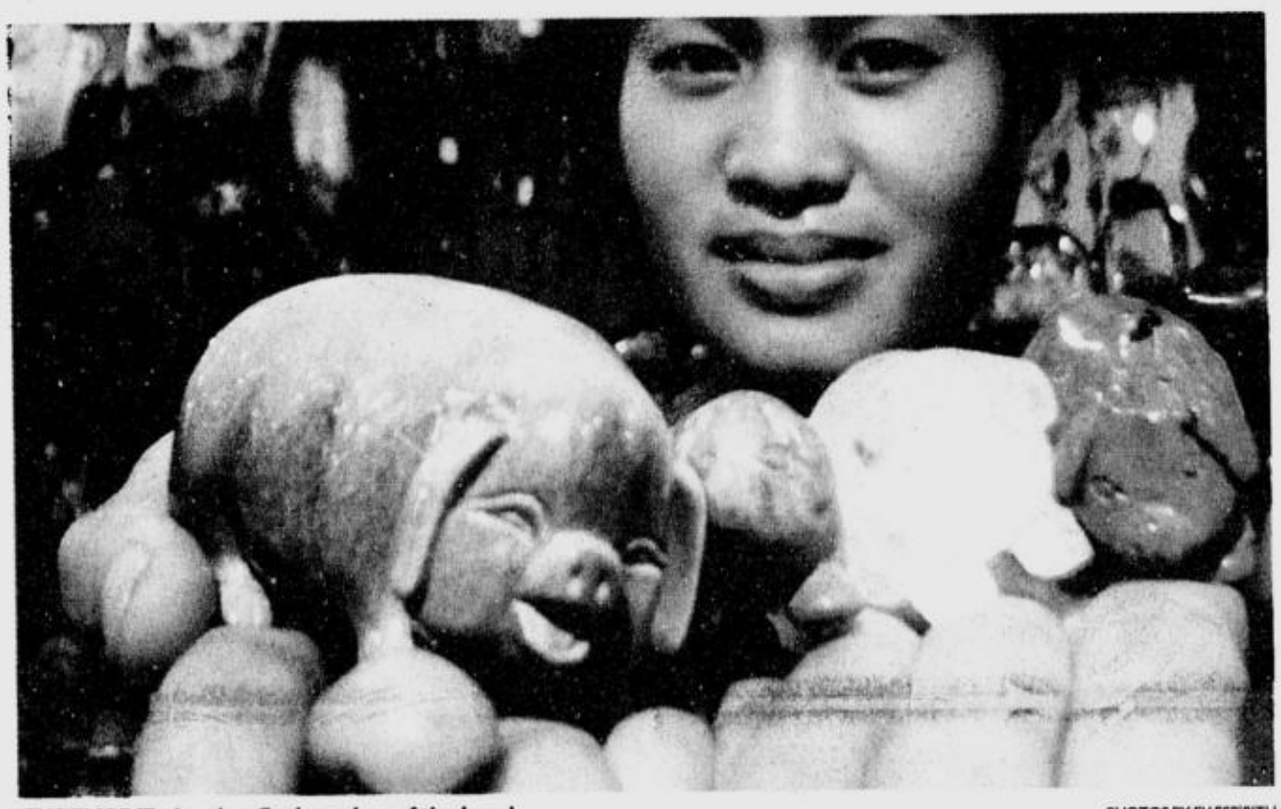
"Even though the Philippines might be a couple of years behind other countries, the market is fast developing," he said.

It also forecasts record business growth driven by the strategy of providing diversified marketing communications services. He sees that they will grow in different capabilities here which include tactical Internet planning.

Last year, Aegis grew by 21 percent in revenue across Asia. "We have grown 70 percent organically," Stahle said. "Thirty percent of that is from new business."

"The Asia Pacific offices are showing the strongest (organic) growth of any region so far," he said.

Before handling Aegis Media Asia Pacific, the Swede once headed Aegis Media Nordic.



EXPENSIVE pigs that fit the palms of the hands

PHOTOS BY EV ESPIRITU

Cashing in on Year of the Pig

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE MOST EXPENsive pigs in the Cordillera, or even in the country, can fit on the palm of one's hand.

Namaste Arts and Objects, a curio shop featuring Nepalese and South Asian crafts, is selling very small pigs made of semiprecious stones to ward off evil, bring peace and even open hearts for unconditional love.

But they are far more expensive than your most expensive French Bayonne ham.

For example, a green piglet slightly bigger than a mongo bean sells for P325. The biggest boar, half the size of the cheapest hamburger, is made of tiger's eye and sells for P3,200.

"What makes them expensive is the carving. How can you carve them to make them recognizable as a pig?" says Alice Shakya, Namaste owner.

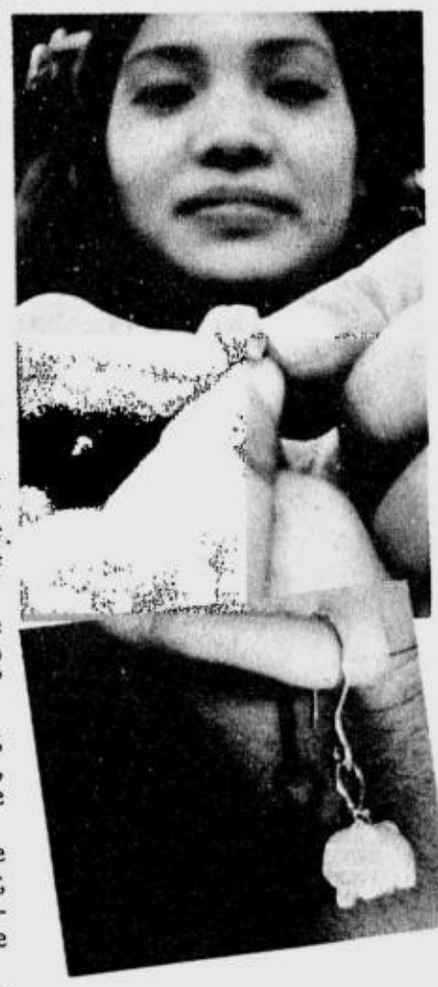
The pigs are made of jade, jasper, lapis lazuli (deep blue gemstone), tiger's eye, petrified wood and rose quartz.

Even among the jade pigs, there are variations in price according to color, Shakya says. The expensive ones, especially for the Year of the Fire Pig, are those in orange and brown.

Shakya says each pig has its own qualities that a wearer would imbibe.

Jade pigs are said to ward off intellectual snobs and calm arrogance, Shakya says. They also bring peace, clarity, understanding and wisdom to the wearer.

Rose quartz pigs, which sell for P980 apiece, are known as the "love pigs" because they channel bad energy and prevent buildup of emotional stress. They also open the heart for unconditional love, she says.



AMONG jade pigs, there are variations in price according to color

The pigs are either worn as pendants or kept in pockets.

"They have to be very near the skin so they can be effective," she says.

Shakya said the thumb-sized lapis lazuli pigs, also selling for P980, have the characteristic deep blue color and are good for enhancing dreams and psychic abilities. They also purify blood and overcome hearing loss.

The tiger's eye pigs, the biggest in the corral, are good for boosting confidence and courage, she said. Because they are too heavy as pendants and bulky for wallets, they can be kept at homes to attract prosperity.

Shakya suggested that the buyer take a pair to attract more wealth.

The brown pigs made of petrified wood, which sell for P980, "enhance natural being," said Shakya. Jasper pigs are the natural nurturer and bring tranquility, wholeness and protection, she said.

Shakya's daughter, Zyla, also gives crystal readings for the Year of the Fire Pig.

Incidentally, Shakya said this year is not good for "pig" people. She said those born in the year of the pig should carry the talisman of the Grand Duke and be wary of new friends.

Other animals with a bit of difficulties this year, according to Shakya, are the rooster and ox (lots of traveling but there may be sadness, difficulty in money, sickness and loss of relatives), monkey (avoid indulgences in alcohol and sex) and tiger (not a good year to risk and gamble).

She said the snake people have the biggest clash with the pig and it brings in a year of money loss and scandals.

Super Bowl opens at SM San Fernando

SUPER BOWL OF CHINA, A CHINESE casual dining place, recently opened a branch in SM San Fernando, Pampanga.

The addition of the restaurant's first store outside Metro Manila brings to 13 the total number of Super Bowl outlets in the country.

Pampanga Vice Gov. Concon Laos, Super Bowl's Richmond Yang and Robert Epes, Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid and Super Bowl's Luigi Vera attended the opening rites.

Super Bowl of China's first branch was at the SM Megamall Megastrip in March 2001. Customers eat authentic Chinese food amid a casual, contemporary ambiance.

Its other branches are at Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati; Jupiter Street, Makati; Festival Mall, Alabang; SM City North Edsa; SM Megamall Megastrip; SM City San Lazaro; Blue Wave, Marikina; Gateway Mall, Araneta Center; Roxas Boulevard, corner UN Avenue; Blue Wave Macapagal Avenue, Pasay City; and SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City. Opening this year is yet another new branch at Trinoma Mall in Quezon City.

Also visit the affiliated Big Buddha Restaurant located at Greenbelt 3 Ayala Center, Makati. It has delivery at 737-8888.

Online gaming is serious business

PHILIPPINE PC GAMING PIONEER, ASIAN Media Development Group (AsianMedia), has its eye firmly set on the booming market for online games within the Southeast Asian region which is projected to generate estimated annual revenue of $141 million by 2010.

Having recently allied themselves with Korean gaming giant NCsoft Corp. to distribute the Triple-A "Pay-to-Play" (P2P) online game Lineage II in the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore, AsianMedia is set to capture the lion's share of the regional market for online games.

"Our partnership with NCsoft was an aggressive coup over other local game providers," recounts AsianMedia president Arturo B. Diago Jr. "We are extremely privileged to now be the exclusive distributor of NCsoft Corp.'s online games and we plan to apply the same formula for success that has allowed AsianMedia to thrive in the highly competitive gaming industry."

The move from local to regional distribution has prompted the eight-year-old company to adopt a brand new logo in line with their broader market.

"Now that we are expanding to multinational distribution of a major MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game) such as Lineage II, we felt the need to identify ourselves more strongly as an Asian company in order to connect with an Asian market," says AsianMedia executive vice president Felizardo P. de la Merced.

Networks that work

AsianMedia is no stranger to providing gamers with fun and excitement. Since its establishment in 1999, it has built up a nationwide sales and distribution network reaching more than 90 percent of Internet cafes in the country. The company has also aggressively pursued the retail market by having its products available in more than 200 retail outlets in the country's major cities.

An old hand at fostering the development of online communities, AsianMedia successfully created the Guilds.ph community in line with its box-sales of the highly successful online game title, Guildwars. With over 13,000 members nationwide, the Guilds.ph community represents a substantial base from which marketing subsequent online game titles can be launched.

AsianMedia is likewise responsible for establishing programs which provide financing, legal assistance, extended payment plan and business consultancy to Internet café owners. "An important part of AsianMedia's success lies in its willingness to explore new ways of doing business with Internet cafés to create mutually beneficial long term partnerships," says De la Merced.

Previously, AsianMedia was also the sole and official Philippine partner of Vivendi Universal Games (VUG), a global leader in multi-platform interactive entertainment. Through this partnership, AsianMedia brought game titles from Blizzard Entertainment and Sierra Entertainment, makers of hits Counterstrike and Warcraft 3 to Philippine PC gamers.

"Our experience from these carefully built networks has made AsianMedia the logical choice for NCsoft Corp. distribution partner not only within the Philippines but also the Southeast Asian region," says De la Merced. "Already, we envision the creation and development of a regional sense of community where gamers from the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia can identify with larger gaming communities outside their respective national borders."

In the middle of all the action

The centerpiece of AsianMedia's distribution of Lineage II within the region lies in Philippine housed game servers that promise to deliver the best possible online gaming experience to Lineage II gamers in the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia.

"With the game servers based in the Philippines, regional players will be able to compete on a level playing field with players from across the globe," says chief operating officer Ronald Allan M. Aquino. "The vastly improved game play these servers provide will attract veteran online gamers looking for new virtual worlds to conquer as well as newcomers to online gaming who will be swept away by stunning graphic realism of Lineage II."

"With Lineage II, AsianMedia enters a new era of rapid growth and development," says De la Merced. "Gamers can soon look forward to AsianMedia expanding even further with more P2P and free-to-play online games in the near future."

"This is where the fun begins and all of AsianMedia's efforts can now be focused on changing the landscape of online gaming," concludes Diago.

RONALD Allan M. Aquino and Felizardo P. de la Merced

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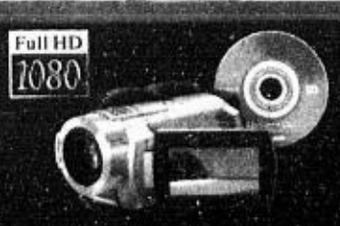

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LUZON: Sm Sta Rosa- Mar 27-Apr 2 • CSI Mall - Dagupan- Apr 13-19 • Pacific Mall -Legaspi- May 4-15 • Sm Pampanga- May 25-31
VISAYAS: BQ Mall -Bohol- Mar 26-Apr 2 • Peoples Park- Tacloban- April 13-20 • Ayala Center- Cebu- Apr 26-May 1 • Sm Iloilo- May 4-10 • Robinson Bacolod- May 14-19
MINDANAO: Limketkai Mall- CDO- Mar 23-Apr 1• Gaizano Mall -Davao- April 12-20 • KCC Mall- Gen Santos- Apr 22-May 1

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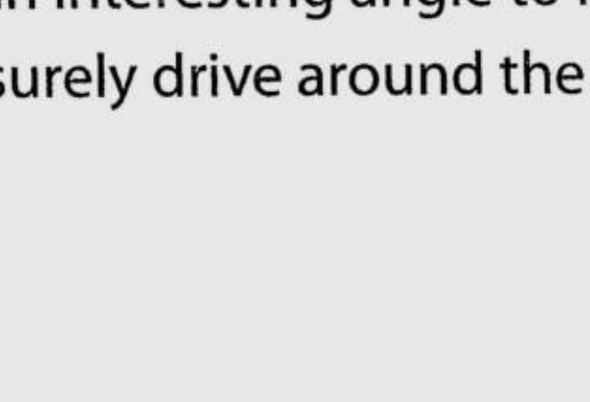

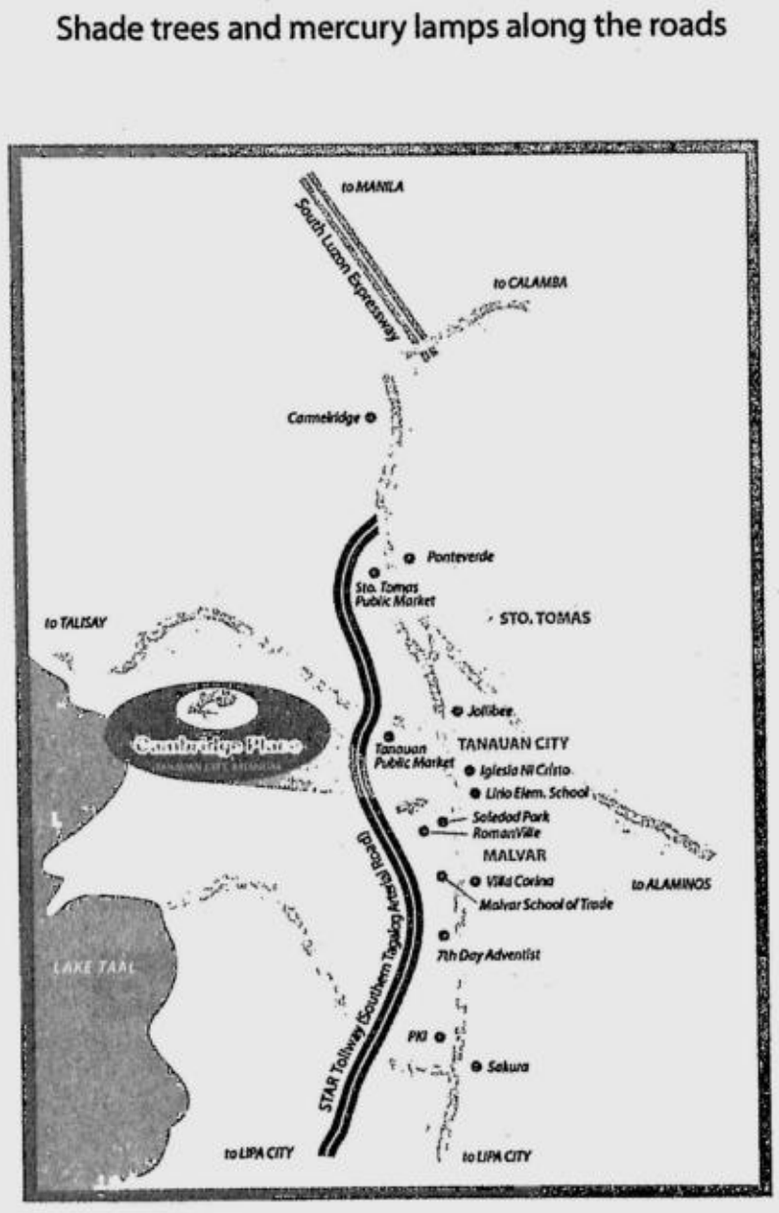

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Contributing Editors
Apples Aberin-Sadhwani
and Jenni Epperson

Wired
Nikki in a hot pink striped button down dress and Samsung K5 mp3 player, and Amanda in a puff sleeved blue dress and Samsung T9 mp3 player

Techie chic

VJ AND SINGER NIKKI GIL and model/socialite Amanda Tengco often step out into the world in cutting-edge fashion. Because of the kind of work they do and the kind of lives they lead, it's important for them to look good and feel great.

"My fashion style is boho-chic and very simple," Amanda says. This hybrid approach to style is further reflected in her soundtrack choices: "I like rock music but I'm very open-minded—it really depends on the song."

Nikki, on the other hand, says: "White tank tops are my ultimate fashion favorite. They go with anything, and never go out of style." Not surprisingly, her music picks are equally relaxed and timeless: "I love easy listening music—classical, RnB, soul. Corinne Bailey Rae is one of my favorites."

With the advent of portable devices, good music is something you can take with you, something that is now as easy as wearing clothes on your back. Amanda says, "I listen to music when I travel, exercise or when I'm just taking a walk. I like to take music with me because it affects my everyday work."

"There are three things that I look for in a good mp3 player: clarity, capacity and design," she adds.

For this reason, she swears Samsung's new K5 mp3 player and the slimmer, multi-tasking T9. The K5 is designed for power: a lightweight mp3 player, it has a very generous 4-gb capacity with its heavy portfolio that includes an innovative touch screen, FM radio receiver, and built-in speakers.

The T9, on the other hand, allows you to have it all: download and listen to your fa-

TECHIE/ C2

Space age
Amanda in a black silk dress with silver details and her tunes from the Samsung T9 mp3 player

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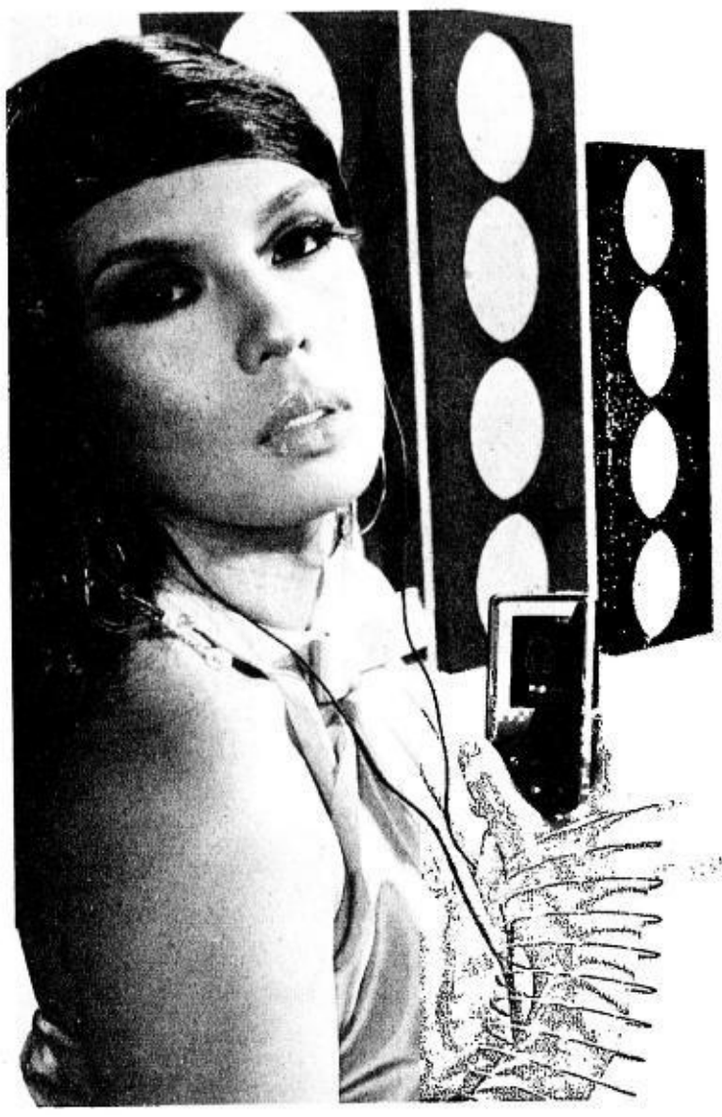


Fashion forward

Nikki and Amanda go minimalist and fashion-forward with a gold halter top and the Samsung K5 and a silver ruffled top matched with a lavender chiffon skirt and Samsung's T9, respectively

Techie chic

Techno-babble

Nikki in a funky army green jumpsuit matched with sexy suede boots and her Samsung K5 mp3 player; Amanda in a slinky halter dress, daring gold sleeveless top and her Samsung T9 mp3 player

From page C1

vorite songs, view the latest runway clips, look at photos, listen to the radio, play games even.

"The K5 is revolutionary with its built-in speakers. It's perfect for me," says Amanda. "Even the T9, it's so compact yet it can do a lot. It doesn't just play mp3's but also videos and even games. It's got everything in a very small package."

Nikki says, "You can't go wrong with Samsung. It's been around for a while and has given us technology that we love." *AAS*

Supernova

Nikki Gil in a regal purple velvet bolero and a striped low cut slip dress with chunky gold bangles, with the Samsung K5 mp3 player as the perfect accessory

Photography ALDWIN ASPILLERA
Styling (of Amanda Tengco) BEA CONSTANTINO
Makeup GELA LAUREL
Hair RAYMOND SANTIAGO

The style council

From page C4

clude white and neutral palettes characterized by delicate detailing and romantic fabrics and cuts. The look is very earthy and ethereal yet sophisticated.

"We want to offer new shapes that epitomize feminine cool by choosing pieces with lots of layers and lace," says Roces.

The collection is exclusive and limited—something all fashionistas yearn for.

"Only one or two people will have any particular piece," says Roces. "You wouldn't bump into someone at an event with the same outfit."

What's more, La Copa also offers styling assistance. "We offer style solutions for women 18-50 years old so that each customer can easily find an outfit that fits her preferences and personality," adds Roces.

"I'm most excited about seeing how Filipinos receive the store's concept. Women now are fashion-conscious and more adventurous when using colors and prints. La Copa will give them an avenue to explore their style."

La Copa will not open its doors until June 2007 but you can avail of its stylish offerings, plus exclusive perks and privileges, at the Globe Platinum sample sale. This by-invitation event for Globe Platinum members is on April 13-15 at the Rockwell Tent, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

To start experiencing the Globe Platinum lifestyle with La Copa, call the Globe customer service hotline at 7301000 or visit the nearest Globe Business Center or Hub outlet.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

THE YOUNG and vibrant team behind La Copa: (clockwise from top) Melanie Go, Dianne Tan, Regina Sambalido and Isabel Roces

Gray matter

Gray overlap coat by Marc Jacobs; gray long sleeves by See by Chloe

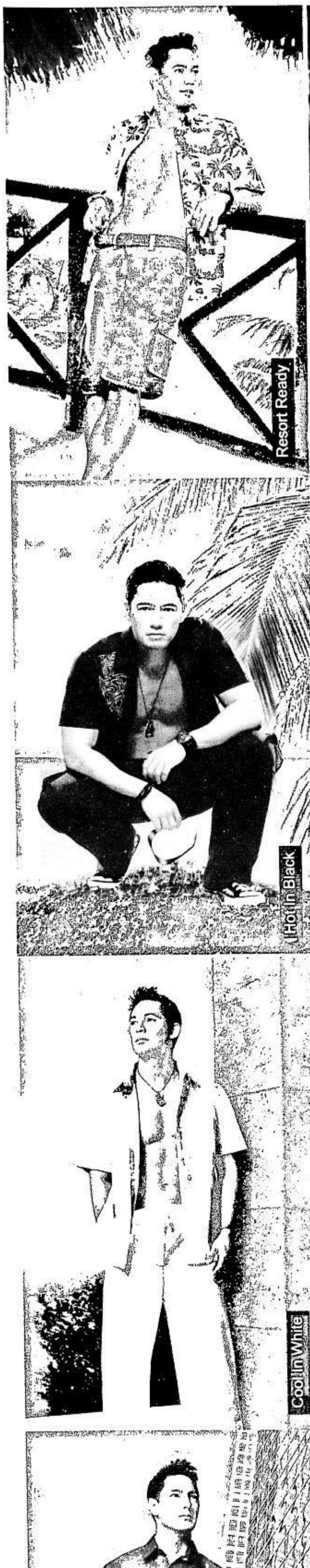
Vested interest

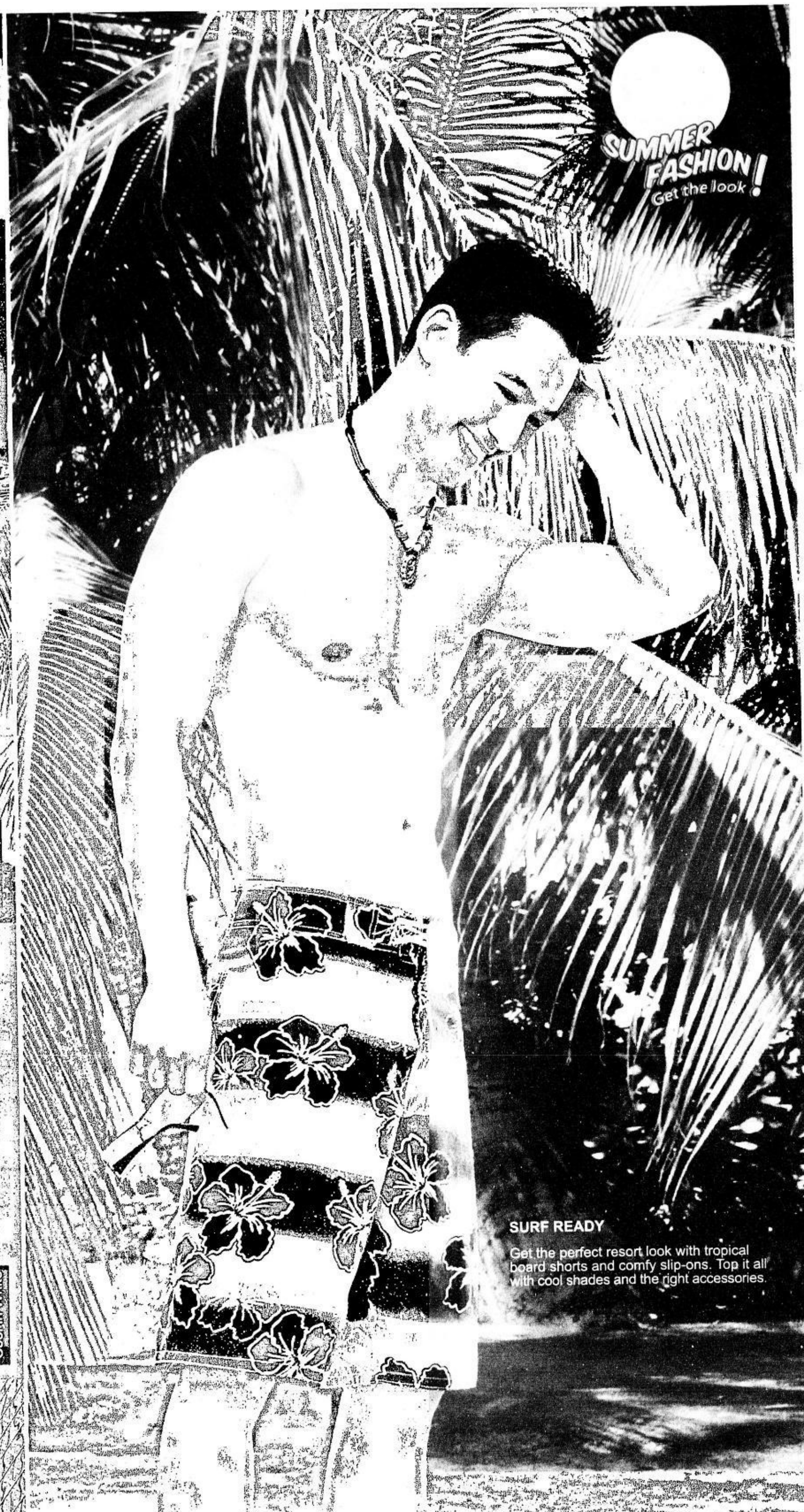
Off-white short-sleeve top by 3.1 Philip Lim; plaid with leather detail halter vest by Marc Jacobs; gray culottes with suspenders by M. Mittis Green; gold cuff ring with onyx, blue sapphire with diamonds on yellow gold and gray leather necklace by Ginger Ignacio

Photography PAOLO PINEDA
Styling SIDNEY YAP
Model ORNUSA CADNESS
Makeup MICKEY SEE for Shu Uemura
Hair NANTE ALINGASA using Kheils Stylist Series
Clothes LA COPA
Accessories GINGER IGNACIO (gingerignacio.com)
Shoes SCHU

Checkmate

Cream eyelet-sleeve top and black and white checkered skirt with zipper pocket detail by 3.1 Philip Lim; cross with diamonds necklace, brown leather bracelet, smokey topaz with pearls ring and leaf-shape ring with green stones and diamonds by Ginger Ignacio





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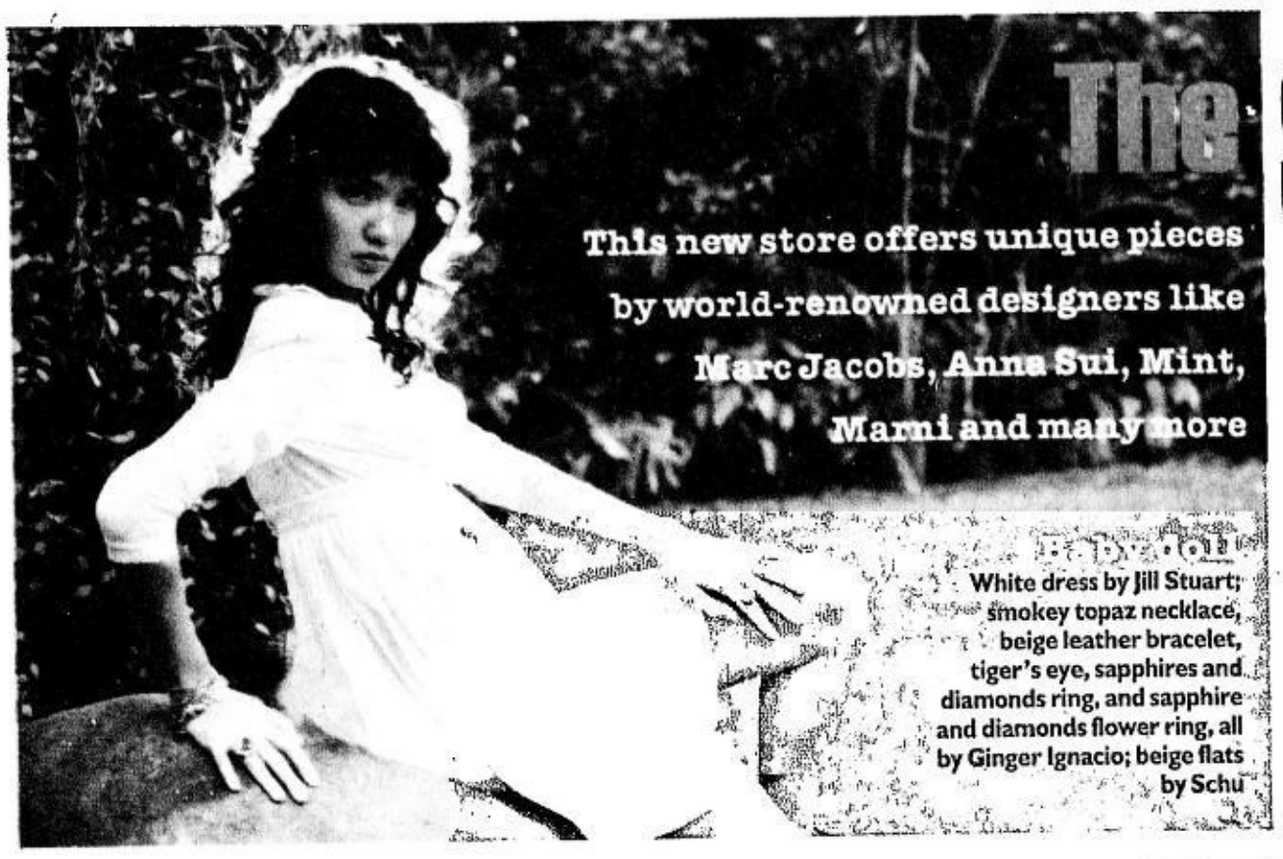


The style council

FASHION-PHILES and shopaholics have something to look forward to this season in the form of La Copa, a specialty boutique that offers one-of-a-kind imported designer pieces to suit various lifestyles.

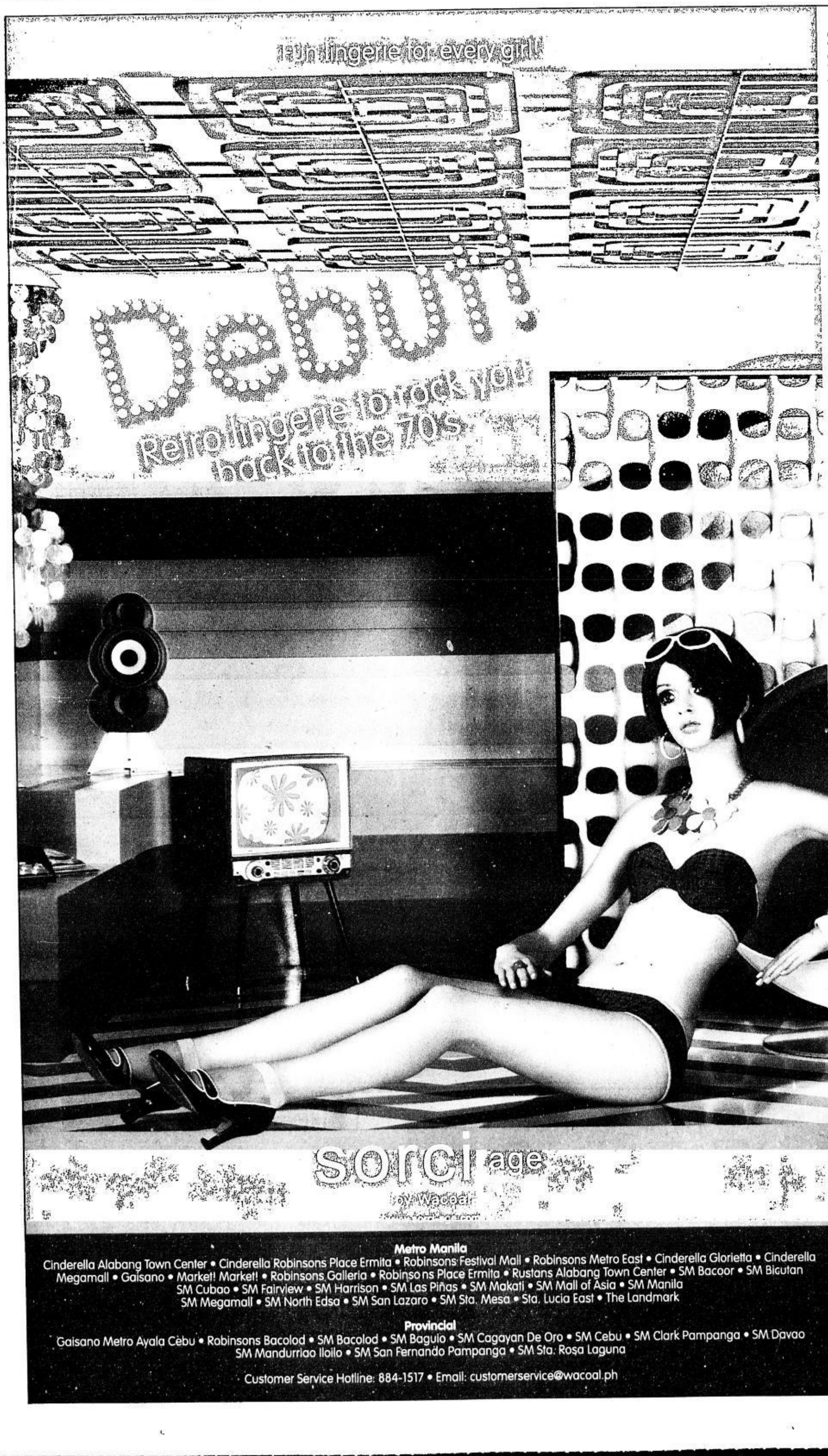
Conceptualized by supermodel Isabel Roces, together with fellow fashionistas Melanie Go, Regina Sambalido and Dianne Tan, La Copa offers unique pieces by world-renowned designers like Marc Jacobs, Anna Sui, Mint, Marni, See by Chloé, CNC Costume National, Catherine Malandrino, 3.1 Philip Lim, M. Mittis Green, Jill Stuart, In Purpurin, D&G, and Gianfranco Ferre.

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

"Filipinas could definitely have more internationally acclaimed design options when it comes to clothing," says Roces. "There are actually a lot of brands the global market is offering, yet there are so many more foreign brands that local style mavens are missing out on, like the labels we offer at La Copa," she adds.

This season, La Copa's featured collection highlights dreamy but contemporary pieces best suited for city wear. Dominant hues in-

THE STYLE/ C2



SHOW OFF YOUR SEXY, PLAYFUL SIDE
with the new sorci age collection by Wacoal!

Naughty or nice. Diva or Boho chic. The new **sorci age** (pronounced saw-see-arch) lingerie collection by Wacoal lets you express your individual seductive style with its varied range of unique themes.

sorci age is a French word that means to be charming. Wacoal believes that a hidden world of playfulness, charm and imagination exists in every woman, and aims to bring her individual charm and playfulness to life with the **sorci age** collection, a sister brand of Wacoal. "We created this collection as a distinctive, fun brand to attract today's young and young at heart," says Toshihisa Tanaka, president and CEO of Philippine Wacoal Corp. "It is for the young, urban woman who is in touch with her sexuality and loves defining her personal style."

Inspired by fashion from the 1930's to today, each theme lets you embrace your feminine charms while letting your sensual side shine. The full Spring/ Summer 2007 collection features a total of 15 different themes.

Take a sneak peek at some of these themes:

Safari Sara
Take a walk on the wild side, as you stride out in bold patterned prints and skins! Show off your style with 3/4 bras and bikini bottoms available in two colors of leopard print: cream and green.

Posh Pamela
Live it up with chic and elegance, where traces of lace and corsetry on lush texture bring out the richness of 50's couture, and the aristocratic lady in you. Lounge in elegant corsetry and matching bottom lined with white lace - available in black and red colors.

The following seven themes will be launched in March 2007: Retro Rene, Simply Valerie, Sassy Sylvie, Brandy Black, Sensual Sandra, Rosemary and Sweet Shirley. Depending on the theme, the retail price for a **sorci age** brassiere will start from P695 and a matching bottom from P195. The **sorci age** collection will be available at Wacoal counters in leading department stores.

The **sorci age** collection will launch simultaneously in Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia in March 2007. There are plans to launch the collection in other Asian countries in the near future. For more information on the **sorci age** collection, visit **www.sorci-age.com.**

Wacoal- Helping Women Realize Their Full Beauty Potential

For more than half a century, Wacoal's goal has been to help women worldwide realize their desire to be beautiful.

Today, Wacoal utilizes the knowledge and experience accumulated over the years to develop new fields, brands and business models, under a design policy based on the keywords of Beauty, Health and Comfort. A market leader in intimate apparel, Wacoal has key operations in Europe, America and Asia.

sorci age by wacoal

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LIFESTYLE

BASH

The boys of summer!

STORY ON PAGE D2

Double Jeopardy ON MATUTE

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This Friday and Saturday up to 12 midnight
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Extended Sale during mall hours
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- Get special rates from these participating hotels: Hotel Intercontinental Manila (815-9711), The Peninsula Manila (810-3456), Renaissance Makati City Hotel (811-6888), Oakwood Premiere (729-8888), Makati Shangri-La (813-8888), Dusit Hotel Nikko (867-3333) and Mandarin Oriental Manila (750-8888).

Glorietta Greenbelt

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A1-186 Series of 2007.

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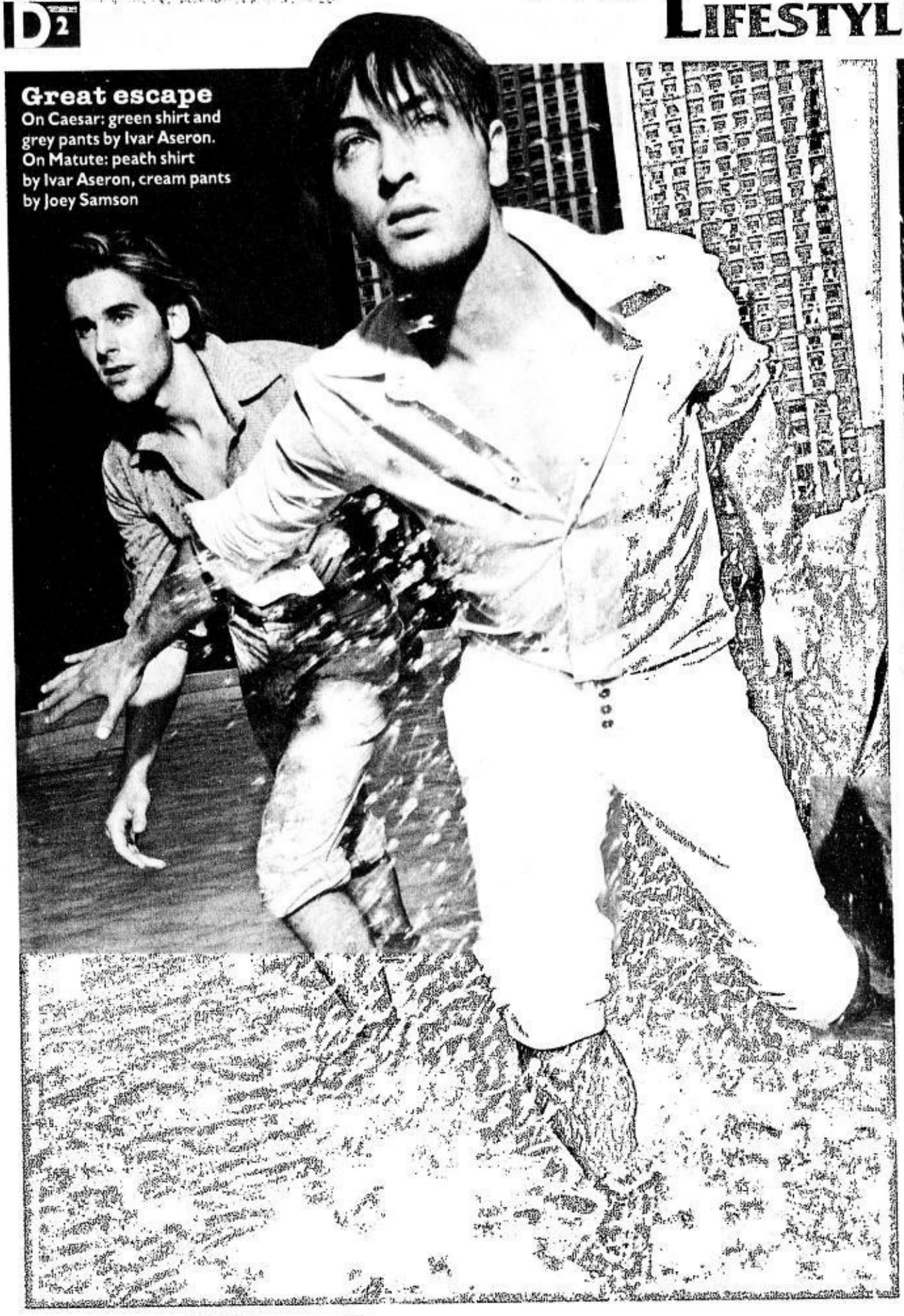


Great escape
On Caesar: green shirt and grey pants by Ivar Aseron. On Matute: peach shirt by Ivar Aseron, cream pants by Joey Samson

Two for the road
On Caesar: grey suit by Randy Ortiz. On Matute: black coat, barong (worn as inner shirt) and black pants by Joey Samson; both pairs of sneakers from People are People

Pinoy designers present their takes on the hot season

Fight club
On Matute: short-sleeve jusi shirt and gray shorts by Joey Samson; black slippers from Bench; hat from Topman. On Caesar: short-sleeve jusi shirt with black stitches and black pinstripe pants by Joey Samson; beige shoes from People are People

By Alex Y. Vergara

IT'S NOW A FEW WEEKS INTO March but the temperature has yet to rise to sweltering degree in the entire archipelago. Afternoons are getting a bit hotter, but evenings remain as mild as December weather.

In a world being slowly gripped by global warming, unusual weather has become par for the course.

But don't let such a climactic glitch lull you into not investing in the right pieces this summer. Before you know it, the season will be here with red-hot vengeance. Looking dowdy just because it's warm is no excuse as you hit open-air bars, beachside parties and even air-conditioned venues.

As we eagerly wait for Summer '07 to fully reign across the land, three of the country's best menswear designers (they're equally good doing women's clothes!) have entrusted us with their signature looks this season.

Ivar Aseron opts to play with proportions in his designs in plain and printed cotton. The juxtaposition of silhouettes is evident in a number of loose pants paired with slim tops.

As for details, the designer's pants come with circular openings and multiple belt loops. A number of plain shirts have snap closures, while a printed top gains added texture thanks to a layered left panel.

"The play of proportions is a summer trend," he says. "As for colors, I'm partial to ash gray, aqua, yellow and lemon."

Randy Ortiz (who'll open an RTW shop in Greenbelt 5 this October) also favors various shades of gray combined with white and hints of red. He relies on an arsenal of summer materials such as cotton canvas, stretch twill and linen, combined with rayon and Lycra, to fashion his pieces.

"I was inspired by the sporty and utilitarian look that's clean, trendy and can be reworked to fit into the corporate world," Ortiz says.

Apart from pleating, Ortiz resorts to such trademark techniques as topstitching and cutting. These tricks are evident in his linen jackets with metal snaps, vests, jumpsuits, tuxedo shirts and stretch tees.

Channeling looks from the 1920s and '30s, Joey Samson has drawn inspiration from "The Great Gatsby," but he infuses it with a contemporary Asian flavor.

"I didn't focus much on trends," Samson said, "but on ways of presenting classics with a modern touch."

For one, he uses jusi as an alternative to regular dress shirts. Not a few of his pieces acquire a constructed and "texturized" look through stitching, tucking and folding.

Samson's trousers have an attached cummerbund, while his coat has a number of interesting breast pocket details. A pair of pants in ivory comes with metallic stretch floral brocade for added visual impact.

Global warming or not, these articles of clothing should be welcome additions to your current wardrobe as you work on an ensemble or two to make you look hotter than summer.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Higher ground
Light blue soccer ball-print shirt by Ivar Aseron; pants by Randy Ortiz; sneakers from Marithé + Francois Girbaud

In the bush
White vest and pants by Randy Ortiz; sneakers from People are People

Photography RONNIE SALVACION
Styling MILLET V. ARZAGA
Grooming ACE SAGUN
of Q Salon (0917-8831282)
Models MATUTE and CAESAR
of Chameleon International Models
Shot on location at Eastwood City, Libis.
Special thanks to Megaworld Corp., Kevin Tan and Shanghai Bistro.

METRO Weddings editor in chief Romina Urra-Gonzales, Metro Magazine editor in chief Melanie Cuevas, Amina Aranaz-Alunan and Charina Sarte discussing summer's fashion trends

FASHION BUZZ
Hot, haute, hot news!

DESIGNERS Patrice Ramos-Diaz, Rajo Laurel, Rhett Eala; (seated) Louis Claparols, Katsy Borromeo (representing Jun Escario), Charina Sarte, Mitzi Quilendrino and Solenn Heusaff

DRESSES and menswear sketches by Jun Escario

BAG by Amina Aranaz

NECKLACE by Arnel Papa

Metrowear showcases summer styles

THANKS TO SAMSUNG AND Metro Magazine, local designers like Amina Aranaz-Alunan, Louis Claparols, Patrice Ramos-Diaz, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel; and young and vibrant designers Mitzi Quilendrino and Charina Sarte are set to show their summer collections during the Samsung Metrowear Summer fashion show, as presented by Metro Magazine on March 22 at the poolside of InterContinental Manila.

Fashion insiders got a sneak peek of what Metrowear, the country's biggest and only yearlong fashion event, has to offer at an intimate gathering at Fiamma bar and cocktail lounge recently. In general, summer's trends for 2007 lean toward futuristic themes and promise to flatter all kinds of body types and suit the varying tastes of fashion-forward and urban-chic Filipinas.

The Metrowear press conference also launched Samsung's Ultra Edition 3G handset mobile phones. As part of Samsung's Ultra Edition design-led range, these stylish mobiles dispel the myth that 3G handsets have to be cumbersome and heavy. Including the world's slimmest 3G mobile handset ever, the Ultra Edition 8.4 (Z370), these groundbreaking mobile phones offer to maximize access to all of the benefits that 3G networks can offer, but with a look that is better than ever before.

Samsung Metrowear Summer presented by Metro Magazine will be followed by the Auggie Cordero Gala Show—the reclusive designer's much-awaited show, his first in six years. The series will then continue with a young designers' show in July and a retailers' show in September. Capping the Metrowear Series is a must-see gala show in November.

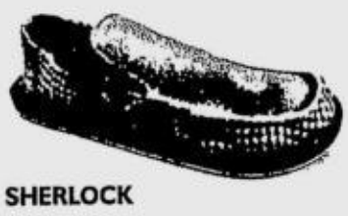
RAJO Laurel with his muses, Venisse Laurel-Hernando, Gela Laurel and Sam Laurel

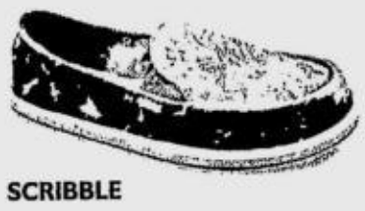
HEUSAFF for Lulu Tan Gan, with Isha Andaya

Tuloy-tuloy na presko
sa Larong Pinoy, Pawis Iwas sa Johnson's Baby Powder
Tuloy-tuloy ang saya ng luksong tinik, sipa, tumbang preso at patintero.

PALARO SCHEDULE

March 10	Sta. Cruz, Manila Poblacion, Makati Sucat, Muntinlupa	March 31	Marikina City San Jose City Bicol Molino, Cavite	April 28	Calamba, Laguna Cebu City Valenzuela, Bulacan Cainta, Rizal
March 17	GMA, Cavite Fairview, Quezon City Lucena, Quezon Pasig City	April 14	San Fernando, Pampanga Davao City Bacolod City Cabanatuan City	May 5	Rosario, Pasig Iloilo Dagupan
March 24	Baguio City Dasmariñas, Cavite Pembo-Cembo, Makati City Pulang-Lupa, Las Piñas	April 21	Muntinlupa Antipolo Cagayan De Oro Abad Santos, Manila	May 19	San Pedro, Laguna Batangas City Pasig City La Union


SHERLOCK


SCRIBBLE

BLENDER

BUMPER Car

Happy feet

FASHION BUZZ
Hot, haute, hot news!

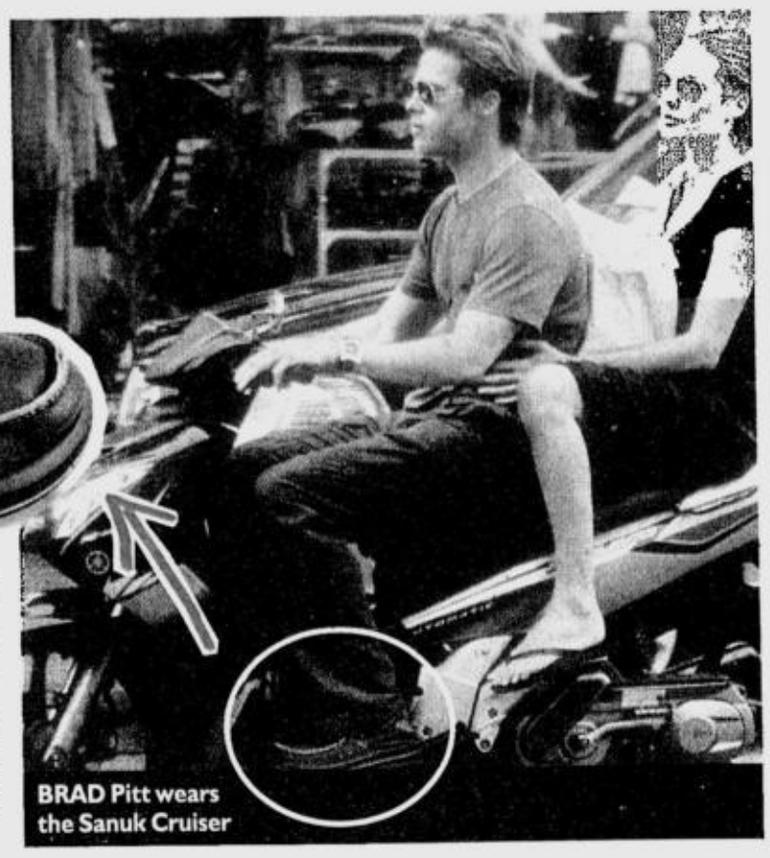
WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT DANCing penguins out to save the world. This time around, happy feet is in reference to, well, happy, healthy feet shod in Sanuk, a young surf brand that offers ultra-comfortable sandals and flip flops designed for all kinds of people, men and women alike.

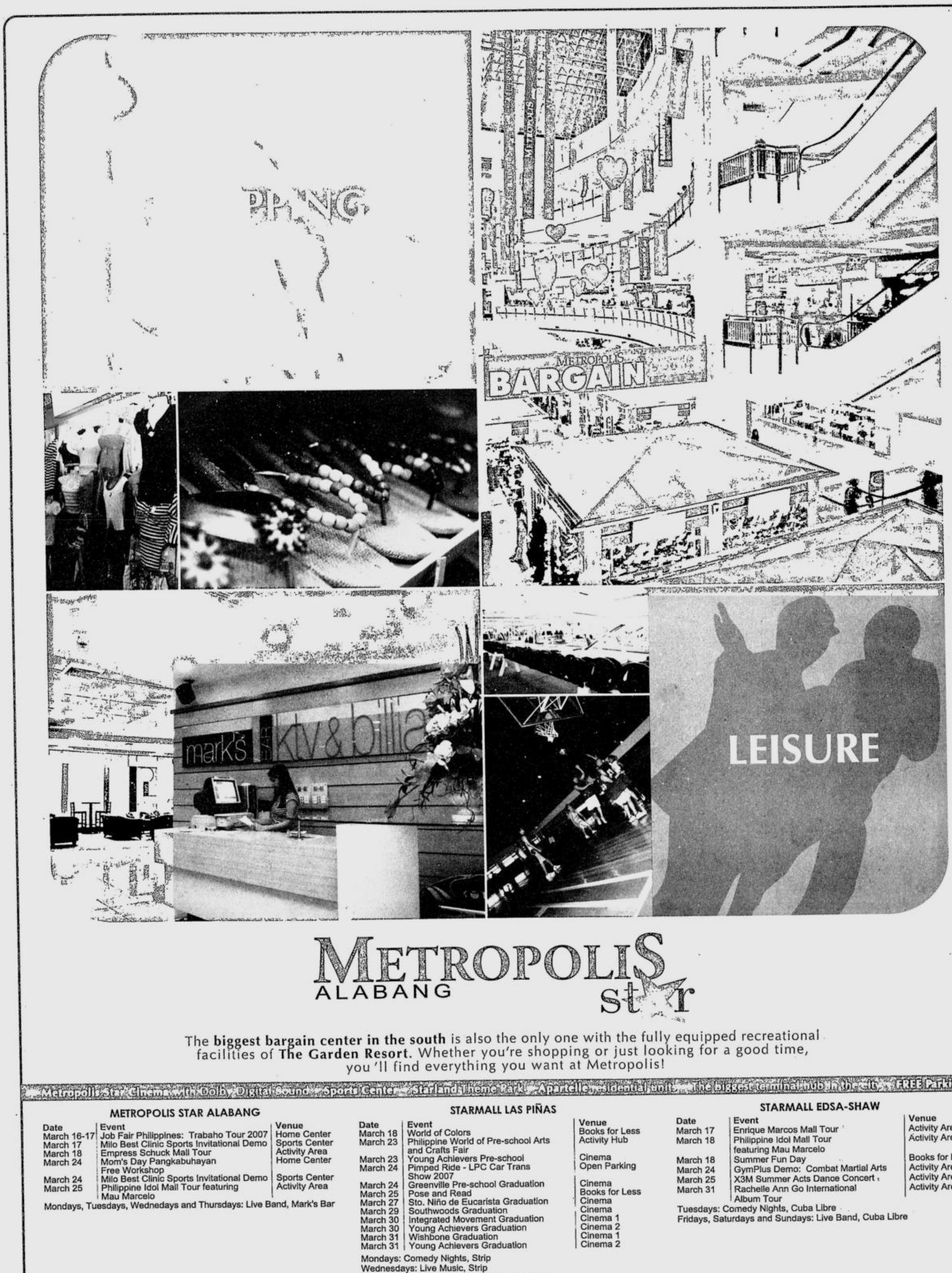
Sanuk means "pursuit of happiness," which is the brand's approach to business and life. Of course, "happy" need not translate to technologically inferior. The company goes to great lengths to set the comfort standard in sandals through its "barefoot untechnology," so that each pair has that optimum combo of softness and durability. Not to mention, funky, trendy, even wacky designs!

Sanuk has become a most sought-after brand in the specialty surf retail market. Although the products are mainly designed for the global surf and water community, everyone's starting to pick up on the trend. Even Brad Pitt was seen wearing a pair.

The good news is that it's now available in the local market, so try it out and find out for yourself what the buzz is all about. Sanuk is available at Rustan's Makati, Shangri-La and Alabang, Chocolate Clothing Co., and Stoked Inc.

STARLET


BRAD Pitt wears the Sanuk Cruiser



METROPOLIS ALABANG star

The **biggest bargain center in the south** is also the only one with the fully equipped recreational facilities of **The Garden Resort**. Whether you're shopping or just looking for a good time, you 'll find everything you want at Metropolis!

Metropolis Star Cinema with Dolby Digital Sound • Sports Center • Starland Theme Park • Apartelle • Residential units • The biggest terminal hub in the city • FREE Parking

METROPOLIS STAR ALABANG

Date	Event	Venue
March 16-17	Job Fair Philippines: Trabaho Tour 2007	Home Center
March 17	Milo Best Clinic Sports Invitational Demo	Sports Center
March 18	Empress Schuck Mall Tour	Activity Area
March 24	Mom's Day Pangkabuhayan Free Workshop	Home Center
March 24	Milo Best Clinic Sports Invitational Demo	Sports Center
March 25	Philippine Idol Mall Tour featuring Mau Marcelo	Activity Area

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednedays and Thursdays: Live Band, Mark's Bar

STARMALL LAS PIÑAS

Date	Event	Venue
March 18	World of Colors	Books for Less
March 23	Philippine World of Pre-school Arts and Crafts Fair	Activity Hub
March 23	Young Achievers Pre-school	Cinema
March 24	Pimped Ride - LPC Car Trans Show 2007	Open Parking
March 24	Greenville Pre-school Graduation	Cinema
March 25	Pose and Read	Books for Less
March 27	Sto. Niño de Eucarista Graduation	Cinema
March 29	Southwoods Graduation	Cinema
March 30	Integrated Movement Graduation	Cinema 1
March 30	Young Achievers Graduation	Cinema 2
March 31	Wishbone Graduation	Cinema 1
March 31	Young Achievers Graduation	Cinema 2

Mondays: Comedy Nights, Strip
Wednesdays: Live Music, Strip
Fridays & Saturdays: Live Music, Mark's Bar

STARMALL EDSA-SHAW

Date	Event	Venue
March 17	Enrique Marcos Mall Tour	Activity Area
March 18	Philippine Idol Mall Tour featuring Mau Marcelo	Activity Area
March 18	Summer Fun Day	Books for Less
March 24	GymPlus Demo: Combat Martial Arts	Activity Area
March 25	X3M Summer Acts Dance Concert	Activity Area
March 31	Rachelle Ann Go International Album Tour	Activity Area

Tuesdays: Comedy Nights, Cuba Libre
Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays: Live Band, Cuba Libre

The holy grail to beauty

By Carla Sibal

WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, THE pursuit of beauty requires a comprehensive strategy. The multi-billion health and beauty industry is constantly bombarding us with claims about its products. So it is necessary to be discerning before spending your money.

The old saying, "Beauty starts from within," holds true for almost anyone.

My relationship with Nutrilite products started two years ago when I toured its farm and plant facility in California. Amazed at the youthful stamina of our sixtysomething guides and speakers who were Nutrilite employees, I decided to try its flagship product, Double X.

From the first dosage I took in the morning, I was fired up like an energizer bunny. I did not have any problem keeping up with the hectic schedule. No wonder, Nutrilite invented multivitamins back in 1934, the first of their kind in North America.

Aside from that, the Nutrilite Health Institute employs over 100 scientists to do constant research, perform quality assurance tests and comb the globe for new plant sources.

The products could attest to Nutrilite's quality-driven methods. It was with awe that I witnessed the development process, which starts even before a seed is planted.

Each plant used is grown on organically fertilized soil.

As the supplements are being manufactured, 400,000 random product evaluations are done for purity and potency on a yearly basis.

Getting the glow

The premium supplements offered by Nutrilite are designed to help you achieve not only increased levels of energy but a vibrant and youthful glow, which are the results of optimal health.

If skincare is your goal, Nutrilite's Hair, Skin and Nails contain Biotin, Collagen, Vitamin C and L-Cystine, which aid the body in counteracting the harmful effects of pollution, stress and harmful UV rays, which cause dry skin and brittle hair.

Biotin is important for the cellular structure as it is involved in the formation of keratin, which is contained in hair, skin and nails, while collagen enhances the structural protein of the connective tissues.

If you're having trouble getting your daily fill of fruits and vegetables, especially if you're traveling, the Nutrilite Concentrated Fruits and Vegetables contains phytonutrients that amount to an equivalent of 10 or more servings of fruits and vegetables.

Just two of these tablets contain the nutritional value of one medium tomato, a cup of raw spinach, five apples, one-and-a-half cups of raspberries, three Valencia oranges and two cups of green tea.

There's also the Nutrilite Ocean Essentials soft gels. These Omega-3 packed supplements deliver DHA and EPA Omega-3 fatty acids equivalent to 3.5 oz servings of deep water ocean fish.

Omega-3 has been proven not only to relieve depression and PMS, but also to boost the skin's ability to hold water, which results in less wrinkles.

DHA helps support memory, learning and concentration while EPA protects the nerves and helps them send clear messages to keep blood and joints moving smoothly.

Slim diet

Promoting beauty is only part of the Nutrilite equation. Last year, it launched a tandem of products. I've been using these products ever since and added them to my daily cocktail of supplements as well.

The Nutrilite Carb Blocker uses only natural plant products like white kidney bean and soybean that can block up to 500 carbohydrate calories per meal and allows your body to absorb the essential vitamins, minerals and fiber for your diet.

The kidney bean contained in the Carb Blocker simply slows down the absorption of complex carbs and sugars so that your body converts the fuel to energy instead of storing it as fat.

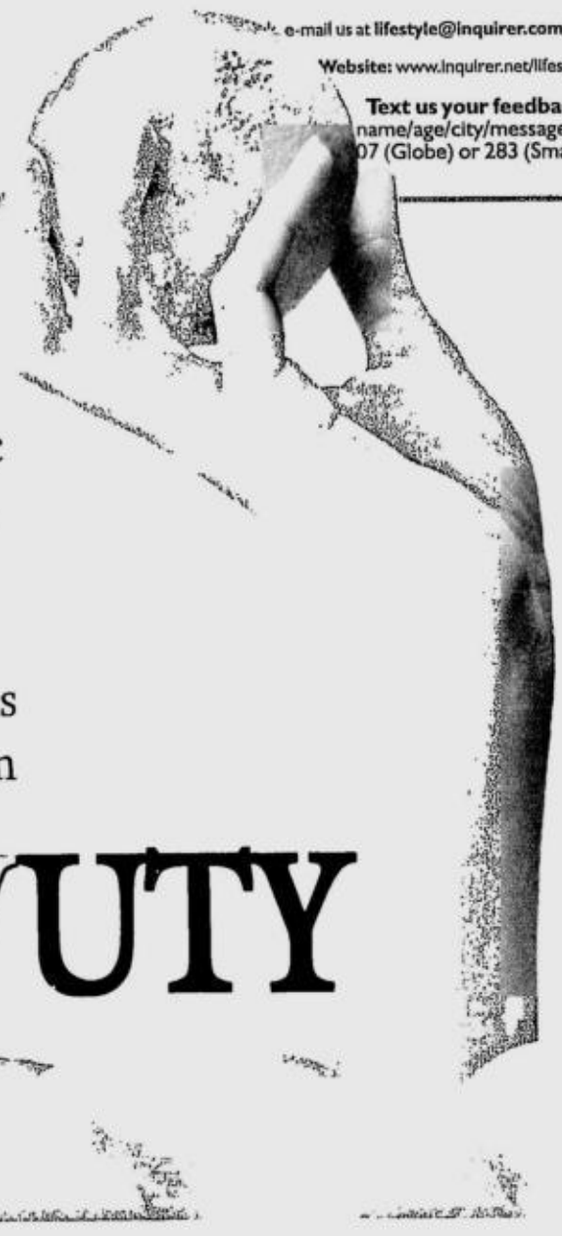
The Nutrilite Chrompic Extra contains chromium picolinate to assist your body in insulin regulation. This process assists in glucose and fat metabolism. It contains Garcinia Cambogia, a source of Hydrocitric acid, which assists the body in metabolizing carbohydrates.

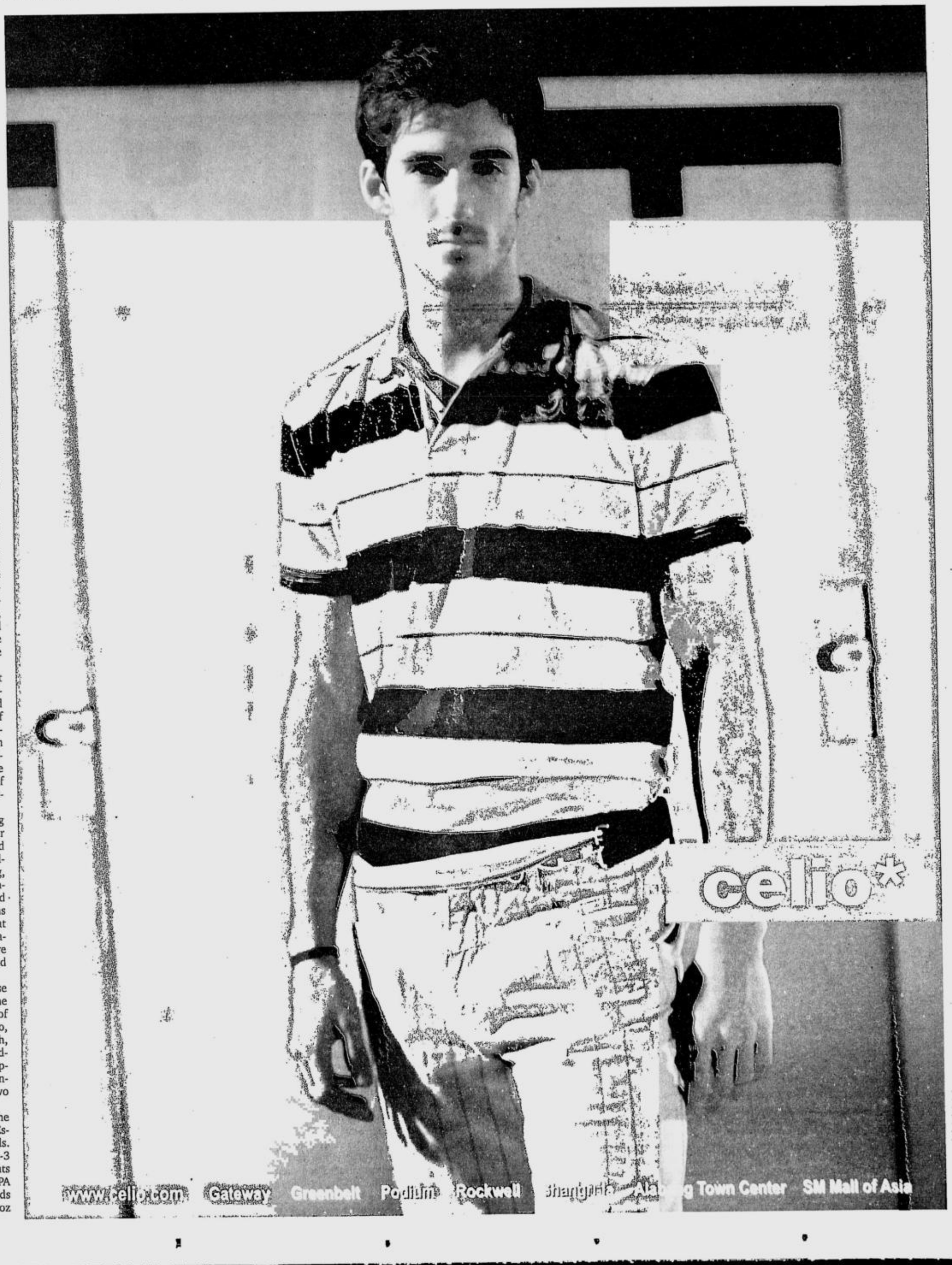
To further boost weight loss, Nutrilite also carries a drink mix that comes in two delicious flavors of café au lait and dutch cocoa.

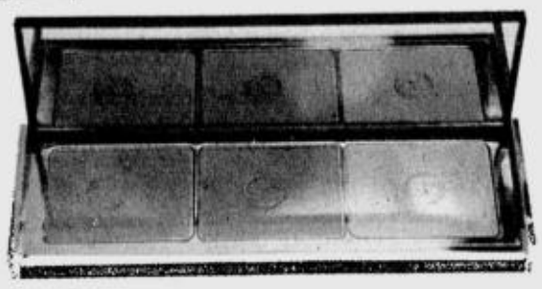
I find these extremely beneficial when I travel and am too tired to have dinner at the end of the day. Plus they're extremely easy to take anywhere.

As a chocolate addict, I must confess that the Nutrilite Fudge Almond Bar is my favorite and I always travel with it in case I have an overwhelming attack for sweets. However, it's nutritionally sound, not like junk food, so you can indulge without the guilt.

THE HOLY/ E3







Scott Barnes three-palette blush
Enhance your summer glow with one brush of Scott Barnes summer palette. Though it comes in three shades, don't think you need to use only one sincé you can also use the darker shades on your shoulders. Available at Rustan's Essenses.

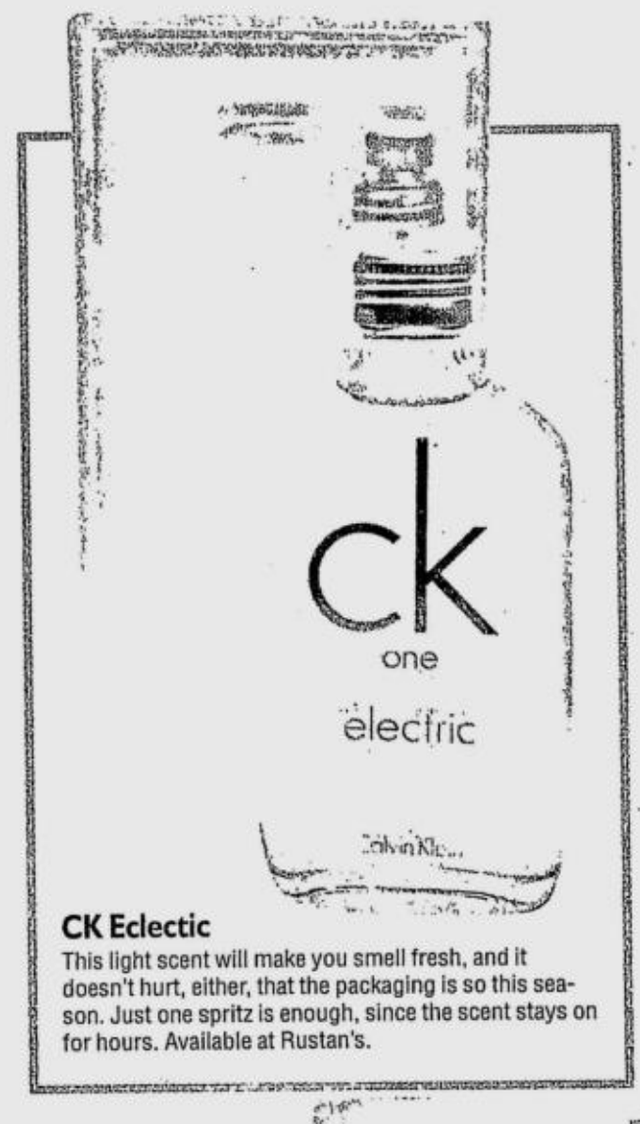
Badger Anti-bug Balm
This will let your stay outdoors longer without having to worry about getting bitten by sandmites. Available at Rustan's Essenses.

Phytomer Instant Repair
Basking under the sun has its painful effects like sunburn and dry skin. Phytomer Instant Repair helps sooth and moisturize, allowing your skin to bounce back from the beating of the sun. Available at The Spa.

Summer lowin'

Look good and feel good this summer! But above all, protect yourself from the sun

HITTING THE beach and giving yourself a break is a definite must-do this summer. And to make the best out of your vacation, make sure you have the best products in tow to maximize the activities you can immerse yourself in.



CK Eclectic
This light scent will make you smell fresh, and it doesn't hurt, either, that the packaging is so this season. Just one spritz is enough, since the scent stays on for hours. Available at Rustan's.

Ria Francisco-Prieto

Nautilus Aqua Eau de Parfum
A refreshing scent that will remind you of everything you love about summer—water, clean air and a refreshing breeze.

Clarins Sunscreen Cream High Protection for Children SPF 30
This rich gentle cream is formulated to be the most advanced protection you can lather on your children to protect their delicate skin. The water-resistant cream has 100-percent heat-resistant UVB-UVA mineral filters.

Biorica Anti-aging Restructuring Night Care
For those who have dry skin and visible wrinkles, this is one product worth trying. Rich in restructuring ingredients that stimulate cell renewal, the night-care cream allows you to say goodbye to wrinkles and dry skin after only a couple of uses. Available at Rustan's Essenses.

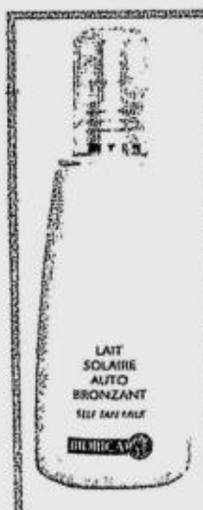
Clarins Sunscreen Cream High Protection for Sun-Sensitive Skin SPF 30
This sunscreen is formulated for people who have very sensitive skin. It is lightweight and easy to spread, and helps promote an even tan without redness and irritation. It is also heat-resistant, with UVB-UVA filters, and water-resistant, which means you don't need to keep reapplying it when you go for a swim. Available at Rustan's.

Murad's Sunguard Dietary Supplement
This increases skin's natural sun protection. Take once a day, preferably with a healthy breakfast, and protect your skin for that youthful glow. Available at Rustan's Essenses.

Dermatologica SPF 30 Full Defense Booster
Easy to spread and gives you the right kind of protection your skin needs when under the sun. Available at Rustan's Essenses.

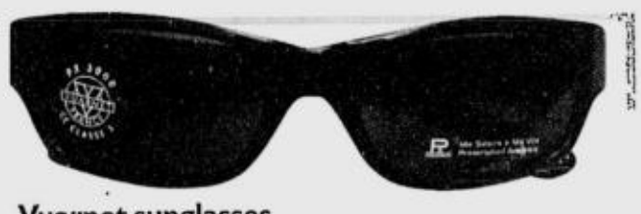
Living T shampoo and conditioner
It has a constructive curl-control formula that is good for humid weather conditions. Available at Rustan's.

L'Occitane Verbena Shower Gel
Contains organic verbena extract that cleans and nourishes skin and scalp. Great for after-sun baths. Available at Rustan's Essenses.



Biorica Self-Tan Milk
If you are stuck at home and don't want to bask under the sun—which I think is a smart choice—then apply Biorica's Self-Tan Milk. Get the color you want without having to damage your skin with too much sun exposure. Skin begins to tan a few hours upon the product's application. It is also a skincare product, thanks to its added ingredients shea butter, jojoba oil, vitamin E and glycerine. It moisturizes, nourishes and protects skin from free radicals, which play a large part in the skin's aging. Available at Rustan's Essenses.

Biorica Tonic Cleansing Water
To take out all the product residue and gunk that make-up leaves, cleanse yourself with Biorica Cleansing Water. It is mild, safe and leaves you with a clean, moisturized feeling. The tonic water also softens and purifies the skin of the face and neck. It contains St. John's wort (two percent) to smoothen the skin, and glycerine to nourish and moisturize. Available at Rustan's Essenses.



Vuarnet sunglasses
Its premium lenses protect you from the harmful rays of the sun. Great for outdoor sports and when getting that perfect tan. Available in all leading sports shops.

Biorica Nourishing Eye Care
This product tones and moisturizes the skin, and prevents those awful wrinkles from developing around the eyes. It contains draining agents which help remove eye bags. Available at Rustan's Essenses.

Nutrition for your skin

By Alex Y. Vergara

Estée Lauder has recently unveiled its Nutritious line of skincare products designed for young Asian women

TODAY'S ACTIVE YOUNG women may have little time for themselves as they attend to a million and one concerns involving family, career and leisure.

No wonder their skin eventually suffers from too much stress and lack of sleep. Premature wrinkles, uneven skintone and a rough, dull complexion are just a few of the telltale signs. Now, more than ever, women need all the help they can get before irreversible skin damage such as deep lines, loss of elasticity and minor sagging sets in.

Inspired by traditional Chinese philosophy that promotes balance and harmony, leading make-up and skinc are brand Estée Lauder has unveiled its Nutritious line of skincare products designed for young Asian women.

The Nutritious line consists of seven products that aim to "neutralize, detoxify and infuse." What's more, the line boasts of having the highest concentration of youth-enhancing anti-oxidants by virtue of a key ingredient.

Certain products such as the Nutritious foam cleanser, energy lotion and radiance essence work both day and night. Other products, like the Nutritious sunblock, night crème and moisture milk/gel, target specific hours of the day.

External irritants

"Nutritious is inspired by the concept of a balanced yin and yang," says Singapore-based Celestine Sng, training and public relations manager of Estée Lauder Companies. "It aims to restore and renew the skin's vitality inside out."

But before you can even dream of detoxifying your skin from so-called environmental aggressors, you have to first neutralize external irritants like pollution and harmful UV rays through such products as the Nutritious foam cleanser and UV protector with SPF 50.

Only then can you proceed to detoxify your skin with the Nutritious energy lotion. After stripping your skin of all unwanted and unwelcome impurities, you then infuse it like an empty vessel with Nutritious moisture milk and gel crème (during the day) and Nutritious night crème (before turning in for the night).

Sng recommends that women (and even men!) start using the products in their early 20s.

There's certainly no law against older women using the line to supplement their existing anti-aging regimen. As a general rule, however, it pays to start on a viable skincare regimen early in life.

"Nutritious basically keeps your skin energized so that your cells remain healthy," says Sng. "And when your cells are healthy they're bound to show on your skin."

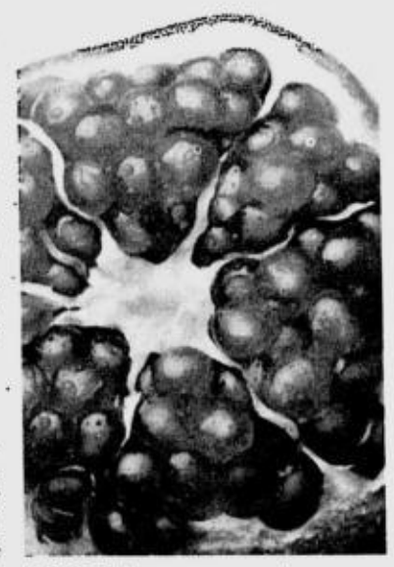
Prevention

By starting them young, Nutritious clearly subscribes to the age-old adage that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. Apart from its promise of promoting radiant and glowing skin, Nutritious seeks to arrest skin damage that might show in the future.

"We're quite targeted when it comes to individual customers' needs and wants," says Sng. "The Nutritious line is aimed primarily at Asians who have generally thinner and more sensitive skin compared to Caucasians and dark-skinned people."

Each product works wonderfully by itself, she assures. Since they're formulated to work in conjunction with one another, she highly recommends that women undergo the complete Nutritious regimen.

"Of course, you can use the line with other products," she says. "At Estée Lauder, we always believe that customers are free to select what products work for them."



INSIDE the pomegranate

Should they limit themselves to just two products, however, they might miss out on the full or synergistic benefits their skin could derive from the full Nutritious line.

Key ingredient

What really makes the line unique from its competitors (as well as from other Estée Lauder products out in the market) is the use of a key ingredient derived from the seeds of the pomegranate.

The pomegranate (*granada* in the vernacular) may not be as popular as the mango among Filipinos, but the sweet, refreshing fruit with countless red seeds in the middle has been credited for alleviating all sorts of ailments since ancient times.

As such, it has become a universal symbol of life, prosperity, harmony, even invincibility and eternal life among a broad range of beliefs, religions and eras.

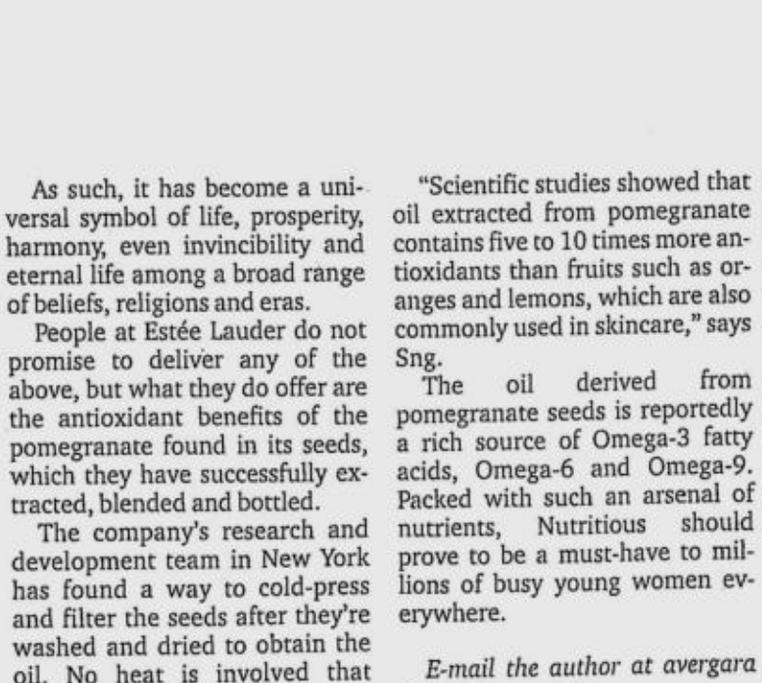
People at Estée Lauder do not promise to deliver any of the above, but what they do offer are the antioxidant benefits of the pomegranate found in its seeds, which they have successfully extracted, blended and bottled.

The company's research and development team in New York has found a way to cold-press and filter the seeds after they're washed and dried to obtain the oil. No heat is involved that could degrade or lessen the oil's potency.

"Scientific studies showed that oil extracted from pomegranate contains five to 10 times more antioxidants than fruits such as oranges and lemons, which are also commonly used in skincare," says Sng.

The oil derived from pomegranate seeds is reportedly a rich source of Omega-3 fatty acids, Omega-6 and Omega-9. Packed with such an arsenal of nutrients, Nutritious should prove to be a must-have to millions of busy young women everywhere.

E-mail the author at avergara @inquirer.com.ph



Look on the tight side

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

INTEREST IN THERMAGE WAS revived when Dr. Vicki Belo was awarded last month by Gary Wilson, Thermage International's VP for sales, for having the most Thermage cases in the world in 2006.

Men as well as women were excited at the emergence of a non-surgical alternative to the classic bloody facelift. But there are questions.

Women ask: "Does it hurt?" Men inquire: "How much is it?"

This is when half the audience walks away because not only does the treatment hurt with a pain so excruciating that one needs to be sedated, the treatment is also shockingly expensive at a starting price of P100,000 per session. And the treatment has to be done every two years to maintain the firmer, younger skin it gives you.

Thermage works by using radio frequency to stimulate collagen production that repairs skin damage caused by aging and the environment. The treatment smoothens fine lines and wrinkles and firms up the skin where sagging has occurred, such as the forehead, cheeks, jaw line and chin.

Thermage is cheapest in the Philippines so foreigners and overseas Filipino workers fly in to have it done here.

But the majority of Filipinos cannot afford it.

Avon to the rescue

Before Avon launched its new star product before the media, I actually had first dibs. Looking through the catalogue, I noticed that the cosmetics house had discontinued its Avon Anew Force Extra Triple Lifting Night Cream, which was one of my fail-safe products to prevent sagging for my cheeks, chin, jaw line and neck.

I hounded the Avon officials to no end so they gave me their more potent Anew Clinical Therma Firm ahead of everyone else. This is Avon's pain-free, cost-effective, no-appointment, no-hassle and, best of all, portable, alternative to Thermage.

My test results: After six days, my cheek and jaw contours firmed up so that my face actually looked smaller. There was no breakout on my face, but I did get one pimple on the double chin area where I had slapped the treatment on thicker than the rest for fear that the double chin would get bigger or sag. I suppose this meant that portion did not need it yet or I missed out on thoroughly cleansing that area first.

For the major press launch, we were whisked off to the Shangri-La Mactan Resort in Cebu for three days of major pampering and presentation.

We zeroed in on neuroscientist Dr. Laurence Dryer who is the manager of the Department of New Technologies at Avon's Clinical Department, which creates the topical alternatives to drastic medical procedures like Botox, fillers, and liposuction.

This 43-year-old French woman and single mom is the first to try the products in the Clinical Line as she is also the one who researches on the active ingredients needed. Her skin is poreless, tight, firm and dewy all at once. Several fine lines on the forehead show when she expresses emotion so we are sure she is Botox- or filler-free. She also has the tightest, firmest cellulite-free body I've seen, with very little freckles for a very fair Caucasian. She was the best endorser of the new Avon treatment as far as I was concerned.

Your genes may be spectacular, like Dryer and beauty queen Precious Quigaman; but after 35, your genes will start to conk out so products and personal care must take credit.

Dr. Dryer told me I can still use my favorite Anew Alternative Intensive whitening treatment (P1,300), but after the ThermaFirm, as my skin is oily so it will serve as a mattifier. Those with dry skin and want both should use it before Thermafirm so their skin would be more moisturized.

Exclusive technology

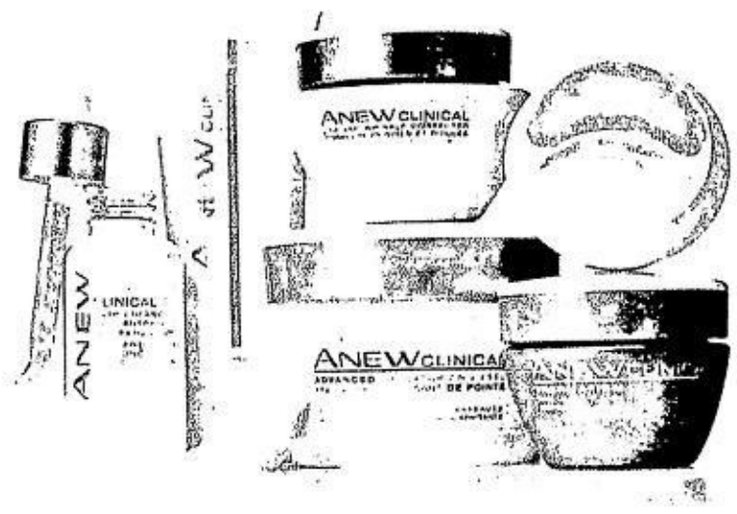
ThermaFirm uses Avon's exclusive Triple Sonic technology formulated with ultrasonic stressed yeast and hydrolyzed plant protein that works immediately. It is so advanced that it can work on the same area that Thermage targets to stimulate collagen production. The technology is responsible for the lifting, tightening and firming effect. Additional ingredients such as fennel, apple root and corn kernel extracts restores youthful skin and defines and firms up facial contours.

In an eight-week study, where ThermaFirm was only used at night, overall skin tightness improved by 51 percent. Some 91 percent of those studied showed fewer fine lines, and 76 percent showed improvement in sagging.

Women expressed the following opinions: 90 percent agreed their skin felt and looked firmer after only three days; 92 percent said they looked younger after two weeks; and 87 percent said their face was restored to youthful shape after four weeks.

The treatment would complement those who underwent Thermage. A jar at P1,200 will actually last you more or less eight weeks when it is used twice a day—morning and night. It could actually last longer as you don't really need a lot.

For those interested but don't have an Avon Lady yet, call the hotline 864-2900.



AVON Anew Clinical products

SEXY LIPS

The new Revlon Plump Sexxxy Lipcolor offers 16 luscious shades and comes with SPF 15. Its patented Triple-Effect Collagen Complex fills and plumps lips immediately on contact. Continued use not only boosts moisture, but helps lips build collagen to visibly increase lip volume for fuller, smoother, and dewy soft lips in just a few weeks. Available at Watson's, Mercury, Robinson's, Cinderella, PCX, Landmark, and leading department stores

SUPERMODEL MODELS NEW LIPSTICK LINE

"It's fun to be a woman. One of the perks of being a girl is wearing makeup," says actress-supermodel Eva Mendes, who is also the international spokesperson for Revlon Cosmetics. With the 16 featured shades of the new Revlon Plump Sexxxy Lipcolor range with SPF 15, Eva is assured that her lips stay plump and dewy soft all the time.

The holy grail to beauty

From page E1

Trim for life

Nothing comes easy in the battle of the bulge, but with a few smart tools to assist you in the beautifying process, a little goes a long way.

So diet, exercise and positive lifestyle change all come with the package.

But Nutrilite's extras make the road to slimness and beauty a much more pleasurable journey. Not only because they allow you more leeway during the weight management process, but also because the products really deliver on their promise.

Nutrilite products are available through Amway at 8148181.

GET glowing with Nutrilite's Hair, Skin and Nails supplement

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEGA MAGAZINE

Aim high and make your mark, Class of 2007!

Show your love and appreciation. Reward your graduates with a Parker.

THEY SPENT long hours for studying. They gave their all on their projects. They sacrificed play to get good grades, for their loved ones to be proud of them.

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You have been there for them, through and through. You have witnessed the amount of energy, sweat and tears they have shed. And now, as they walk up the stage to receive their diploma, you rejoice with them in their moment of glory.

Now that your graduates are entering a new stage in their lives, give them the perfect gift for this great occasion. Present them with something special – give them a Parker.

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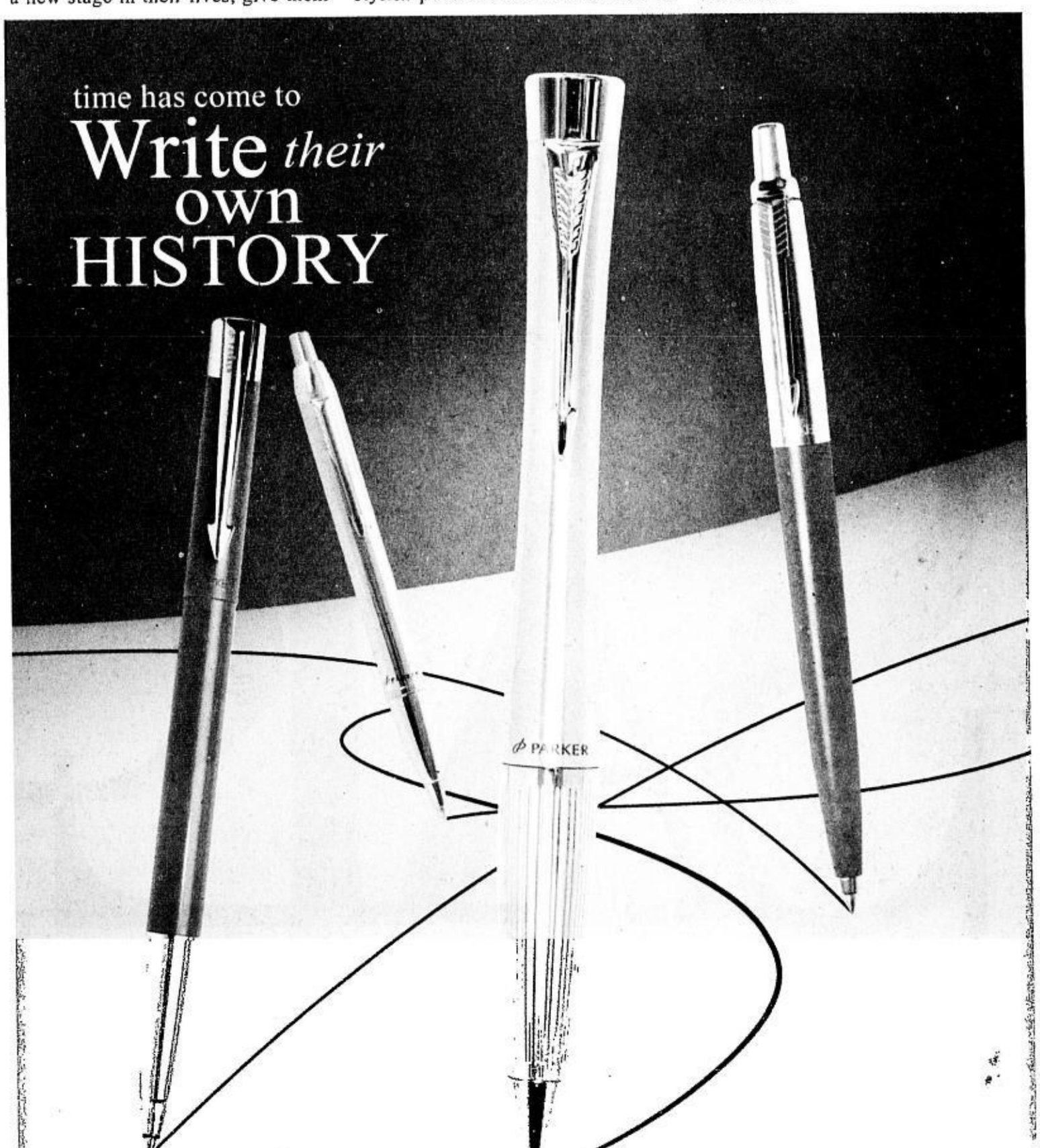
Encourage your graduate to move forward and make a mark. Inspire them to excel. Arm them on their new journey in life with a Parker pen. Available at all bookstores and department stores nationwide.



The moment has come where their simple thoughts can open the path to glory.

Help them create their own story. Inspire them to make a mark. Arm your graduate with a Parker pen.

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4 SM Supermalls launch weekend sale

Sizzling summer savers are up for grabs at SM City Fairview, SM Supercenter Pasig, SM City Dasmariñas and SM City Iloilo on March 16, 17 and 18.

Best-buy collections include exciting new arrivals in summer fashion, big and small appliances, health and beauty products, sports gear, home furnishings, selected items for outdoor living, the best deals on all sorts of gadgets and electronic products, plus so much more!

3 day SALE

march 16 • 17 • 18

Mall hours: **10am - 10pm**

SM SUPERMALLS

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0929, Series of 2007

DASMARIÑAS • ILOILO

Per DTI-Cavite Permit No. 064, Series of 2007 | Per DTI-Iloilo Permit No. 02-093, Series of 2007

reserved parking

Parking spaces have been reserved for **SM Advantage** and **SM Prestige members** on a first come, first served basis at SM City Fairview, SM City Dasmariñas and SM City Iloilo during their 3-Day Sale event on March 16, 17 and 18.

more reasons to shop

SM City Fairview

Don't miss the irresistible discounts of up to 50% on super choices mallwide.

Pause for tempting treats at the mall's coffee shops, restos and food kiosks.

Enjoy with the whole family at SM Storyland.

Strike a lot of fun at the SM Bowling Center or relax in the cool comfort of SM Cinema as you enjoy watching your favorite movies.

Whatever you're malling for – you'll find values a-plenty at SM City Fairview!

shop closer to home

SM Supercenter Pasig

Less than a year after it opened its doors to the public, SM Supercenter Pasig has become the convenient one-stop super store for shoppers residing in the vicinity of Frontera Verde in Pasig City.

Commuters plying the C-5 route to and from Ortigas and Katipunan Avenues have also made SM Supercenter Pasig their stop-over shopping destination. **Open from 10 am to 12 midnight on March 16, 17 and 18.**

Shop worth **₱1,000** at SM HYPERMARKET to get a **FREE Parking Coupon!**

Offer valid thru May 15, 2007.

one-stop convenience shopping

SM City Dasmariñas

SM City Dasmariñas' central location along two major traffic arteries (Governor's Drive and Aguinaldo Highway) has proven to be a boon for residents in the area who prefer the convenience of one-stop shopping.

The March markdown event is also welcome news for shoppers on the lookout for cool summer deals.

Eat out at SM Food Court and watch a movie at SM Cinema.

lifestyle shopping

SM City Iloilo

SM City Iloilo in Mandurriao has become the veritable shopping mecca of Panayanons.

The cluster of stores – offering a wide mix of merchandise and services – answers the need of Ilonggos for a one-stop lifestyle shopping destination.

Eat together at SM Food Court then watch the latest movies at SM Cinema.

SHOP TO WIN

3-Day Sale shoppers get the chance to win one of 80 **Xtreme Version 9 Videoke Microphones** at stake (20 units per mall).

Every P500 single-receipt purchase (cash or charge) from SM Department Store, SM Supermarket, SM Hypermarket or from any participating mall establishment (food or non-food) entitles shoppers to join one of two ways:

1. **raffle coupon**, which they can fill out and drop at designated drop boxes; or
2. **texting SM to 2366** for their electronic entry (SM City Fairview and SM Supercenter Pasig only).

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Marc Jacobs suffers 'relapse' after 7 years of 'sobriety'

MISS Cebu winner Loise Tan and Miss Universe Natalie Glebova. Standing: Philip Rodriguez; Chappy Chaturongkol, CEO of Singha Beer; Louie Cruz; and Anton Mendoza

LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

LV designer enters rehab

WE WERE SURPRISED TO READ last Tuesday in Women's Wear Daily that **Marc Jacobs**, one of today's design geniuses, had entered a rehabilitation facility in Arizona to check his drug and alcohol abuse.

The report said the Louis Vuitton designer had suffered a "relapse" after seven years of "sobriety." He flew to the United States for the rehab a day after showing his Louis Vuitton collection in Paris.

Drug and alcohol abuse has always lurked in the shadows in the glitzy and glamorous world of fashion and beauty.

Sometimes, in fact, it's not really hidden in the shadows but out in the open, if not de riguer. Cocaine chic wasn't just a look (remember the charcoal-lined eyes and dark eyeshadows) or a trend; it was a lifestyle.

However, only an (un)lucky few get snagged by the tabloids like **Kate Moss**, who has been in and out of "wellness centers" but who nonetheless has managed to keep her contracts. She, in fact, has her own fashion line now.

Local scene

In the Philippine scene, substance abuse is not synonymous with fashion, but with the club scene in general, and with intimate parties and dinners, of course. (Just count the times some people flit in and out of the rest room, and not because of about-to-burst bladder.)

Unfortunately, or fortunately, our fashion designers, except for a few, and models aren't really rolling in cash to be able to sustain substance abuse. The small blessings of a Third World economy!

What timing. At dinner last Monday, **Annabelle Rama** went on and on about how some young people who had it all too soon tended to waste their money on drugs.

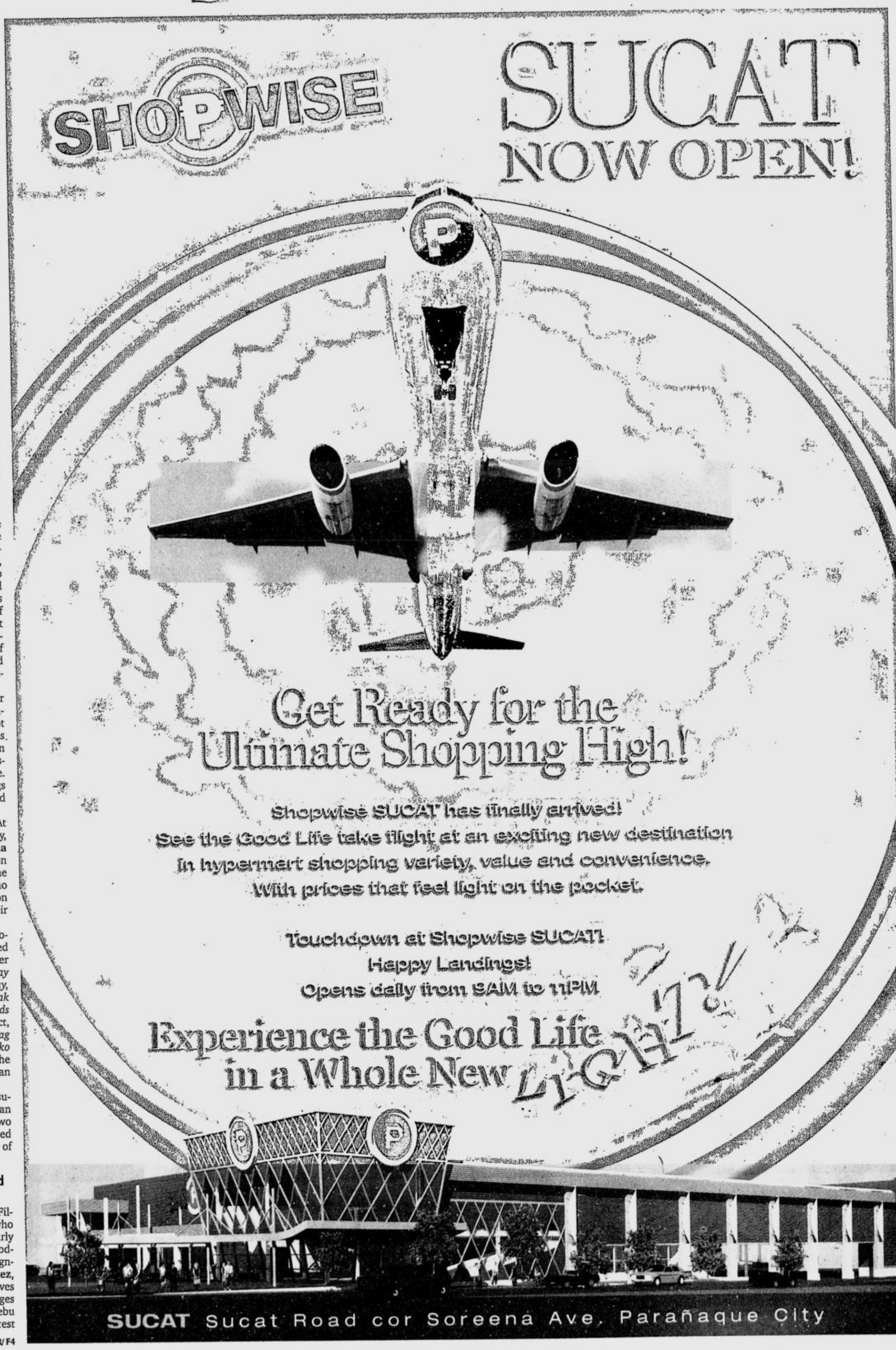
This mother of today's hot stars barked at the table in her trademark *taray* voice: "*Kaya, 'day, sabi ko sa mga anak ko: 'Pag may friends kayo na* addict, *ipahuhuli ko. 'Pag kayo, pahuhuli ko rin.*'" No one in the table dared start an argument with her.

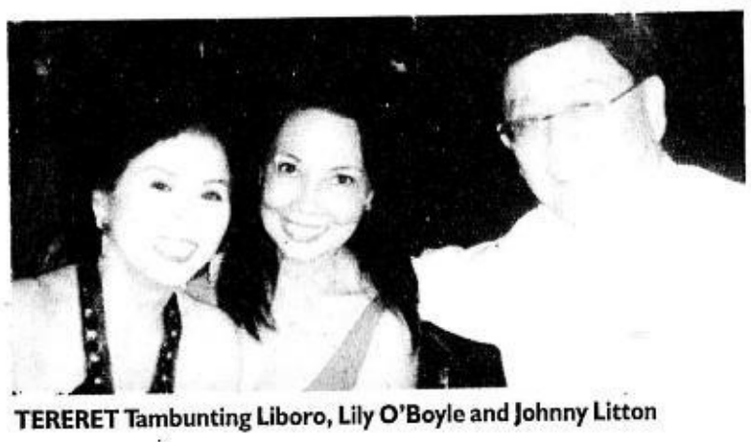
Sometimes the super-glam set can learn a lesson or two from the unpolished Annabelle Ramas of this world.

Mothers behind the beauties

Speaking of Filipino mothers who are in control, early this year, at the prodding of Cebu designer **Philip Rodriguez**, we found ourselves as one of the judges in the Miss Cebu 2007 beauty contest

LV DESIGNER/ F4





TERERET Tambunting Liboro, Lily O'Boyle and Johnny Litton

CLOSE PALS. Hostesses of the dinner, Mayen Carmona (left) and Jojo Zabarte (right) with the honoree, cosmetics queen and China's TV personality, Yue Sai Kan

VIETNAM'S Air France mega asset Louie Vergeon, Melissa Lopez and Joel Journe, visiting from Paris

FAITH Ocampo, Pierre Clero and architect Conrad Onglao

GABOR Vamberi, Preciosa Soliven and Charina Zaragoza

Manila fetes China's 'cosmetics queen'

BRIDE-TO-BE Anna Sy with hostess and wedding sponsor Baby Cruz and Polo Club president Isabel Wilson

BETH Dizon and Marga Binamira

SEVRINE Mailhe, Tisha Cruz Bautista and Pilar Martinez-Miranda

THE GANG. Jane Walker, Margie Sy, Bona Tan, Mailet Bonoan and Vanna Virata

FELY Atienza and Tisha Cruz Bautista

THE BRIDE-TO-BE'S parents Josie Sy and banker Ramon Sy

CAMILLE Samson

TESSA Prieto-Valdes, Rajo Laurel and Malou Gamboa

BETH Dizon

JACKIE Antonio, Arnel Papa and Ching Cruz

AFORMER TELEVISION ANCHOR ON American television and now a hotshot personality on Chinese TV, **Yue Sai Kan** breezed into town for a too-short two-day visit. Known in China as the "cosmetics queen," she checked out the furniture fair at the World Trade Center. She shopped for Filipino home ware and accessories for several of her new *tres* chic lifestyle stores in Shanghai and Beijing, dahlings.

The following day, she was treated to an intimate dinner party by her close pals: world traveler **Mayen Carmona**; Air France-Vietnam's **Louis Vergeon**; well-loved couple **Jojo** and **Henry Zabarte**; and **Johnny Litton**.

The party in her honor was held at the fabulous mansion of **Tereret Tambunting** and **Andy Liboro**. Guests enjoyed the super menu prepared by The Plaza of vivaciously adorable **Millie Reyes**.

Seen having a great time, *palanggas*, were such fab personas as stunningly beautiful **Nikki Prieto Teodoro**; architects **Conrad Onglao** and **Gerry Contreras**; **Melissa Lopez** and **Joel Journe**, who were on a visit from France; **Conchita Toda**; **Anton Roxas**; New York socialite and author **Lily O'Boyle**; vibrant **Pinky Tobiano**; **Charina Zaragoza**; **Baby Fernando**; Dr. **Pierre Clero**; **Faith Ocampo**; and Ambassador **Preciosa Soliven** of the Unesco Philippine National Commission.

"It is a short but really heartwarming visit for me," Yue Sai Kan said after a toast was given in her honor, dahlings.

"And one thing, I must add is Filipino hospitality is hard to beat!"

Anna Sy's bridal shower

For any would-be blushing bride, a bridal shower is always special, *natch*. And it was no different for brilliant architect **Anna Sy**. Her bridal shower was hosted by glamorous **Baby Cruz** and Baby's attractive daughter, **Tisha C. Bautista**. Baby and Tisha will stand as sponsor and matron of honor in the wedding, respectively.

Held at the posh Le Soufflé resto of the Rockwell Club, the fun gathering was attended by another sponsor-to-be, Polo Club's first lady president, *la simpatica* **Isabel Wilson**, as well as by **Pilar Miranda**, **Tina Bonoan**, **Rona Tan**, **Sevrine Mailhe**, **Barbara Aboitiz**, **Felicia Atienza** and **Vanna Virata**. Anna's parents, **banker Ramon Sy** and **Josie Sy**, also were there.

The fun began *après* the excellently prepared dinner by the one-of-a-kind chef, **Jessie Sincioso**. A short question-and-answer game was prepared by the hostesses. Hot questions ranged from Anna's pet name in the family to questions about her tall dashing groom, banker **Steve Laurence**.

Correct answers from the audience were rewarded with exquisite snuff-bottles. Don Perignon poured, sending everyone into a bubbly high, *palanggas*.

The fun affair ended with great giveaways and everyone exchanging hugs and kisses. Expect more of the same when the wedding takes place in Hong Kong, dahlings.

Arnel Papa at Greenbelt 5

First, **Amina Aranaz's** fabulous bags. Now, **Arnel Papa's** gems. Papa will be opening his own boutique in Ayala Mall's chic Greenbelt 5, no less. He will be joining top local designers in a series of exhibits to kick off the Greenbelt 5 opening.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

"I'm glad there's a venue where more people can get acquainted with my work," the talented designer told us.

Arnel is a valued player in the Philippine design scene. He's a legend in his own right. He's known for his balanced aesthetic as he seamlessly blends the native with the contemporary. He has also captured an international following, as he has been exporting to Europe and the United States while working from his home base in Marilao, Bulacan.

Arnel's handcrafted jewelry is constantly in the pages of fashion and lifestyle glossies here and abroad, including Vogue. Some writers have labeled his work "wearable art."

Hey, take note of Arnel Papa's artistry. Support our very own creative designers in the new house of "Filipino ingenuity," Greenbelt 5, *palanggas*.

Warehouse 135 opens

For months, we had been hearing this loud buzz about a new club opening, *palanggas*.

The long wait is finally over. The wow Warehouse 135 is now the official residence of the newest and hottest dance events promoter in town, Driven Manila.

Warehouse 135 has opened its doors to the town's night owls. During the opening, guests were treated to the sounds of international DJ **Shunji Moriwaki** and our very own **Anton Ramos** and **Elmer Dado**.

A *tres* private party had been held before the grand opening with Global Underground's **Lee Burridge**, **Anton Ramos** and **DJ Patch** playing tunes.

The structure is of a modern and industrial design. Its lighting and special effects were designed by **Martin Mac**. Its sound architecture was by Eastern Acoustic Works (US), winner of the "Best Sound System" and "Best Sound Product" awards at the 2006 Club World Awards.

The 20-year-old 600-sqm warehouse was transformed into a chi-chi club. With a magnificently huge DJ's booth, a great dance floor, a bar overflowing with booze, comfy lounge chairs and bar tables on the ground floor, and the exclusive VIP rooms on the second floor, the club was so homey and great, I could cry out, at last!

And just who do we thank for the breakthrough, *palanggas*? *Après* seven years of doing massive dance events in big venues, Team Driven's hotshot **Domini Primero**, no less, had taken a graceful exit while at the top of the game in order to follow his dream of building his own club.

Cheers to Motorola, Chivas, Smart Gold and Winston for helping launch the Warehouse. Without you, guys, the club's great opening would not have been possible.

Corrections

In the column last Tuesday (March 13) regarding **Anton Mendoza's** birthday, the restaurant should have been Nanohana and not Hei Chin Lou as reported.

And in the March 3 column about 2006's top bars and restos, the correct name of the establishment where the menu is prepared by chef **Fernando Aracama** is Cuisine. It is at The Fort.

Our apologies.

PINKY Tobiano

PAL vice president Emilio Yu

WAREHOUSE 135 hotshots. JP Bautista and main man Domini Primero

SHU Uemura's Tina Tinio, Motorola's Mari Litonjua, Stephen Ku and Shu Uemura's new top gal Tessa Dragon

PR WHIZ GP Reyes, southern gent Vince Consolacion, sultry May Muñoz and Sebastian Zahn

WAREHOUSE first lady, beauty queen Joanne "Josa" Quintas Primero with Hilary Bautista and Lisa Buenaflor

FUN young couple Nikki and Malou Romero

ORANGE Aberin and talented designer Rhett Eala

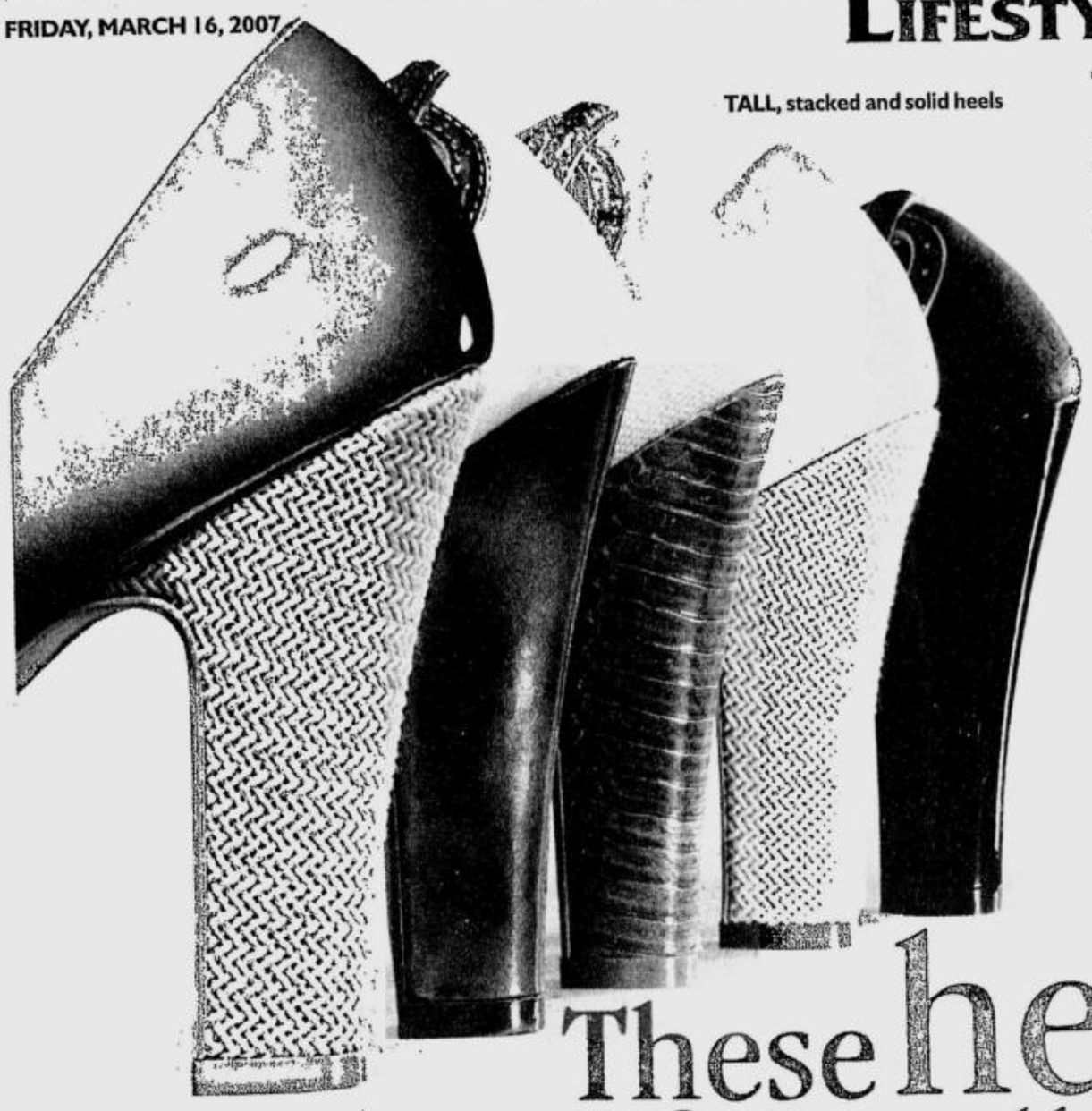
DIVISION manager of Ayala Malls Group Cathy Bengzon; Leah Puyat; senior division manager of Ayala Malls Group, CJ Jessena

AYALA Malls Group vice president for finance Cora Dizon, vice president and deputy group head Rowena Tomeldan, fashion designer Ana Rocha, and Ayala Malls Group senior division manager Myrna Fernandez

RUBY Gan

LEICA Carpo of Sunday INQUIRER Magazine

BAR OWNERS. Absinth's Cristine San Diego with Temple and Embassy's Erik Cua



TALL, stacked and solid heels

These heels are made for walking

This year marks the first time Cole Haan is applying the Nike Air technology to its spring/summer collection of high heels and platforms

By Alex Y. Vergara

IN ALL MY YEARS AS A wannabe fashionista covering the fashion beat, there's one aspect of the business I've yet to fully get a handle on due perhaps to anatomical reasons as well as social conventions: wearing high heels.

Sarah Jessica Parker, star of the defunct HBO series "Sex and the City," may have inspired untold numbers of women to slip into a pair of elevated sling-backs or the most pointed of stilettos, but I doubt if she had the stamina nor the patience to endure wearing one herself all day long on the set.

Unlike Parker's character, real women who opt to wear a pair of high heels to work risk experiencing sore toes, aching arches and strained calf muscles even before half the day is over. But in the name of fashion, many of my female friends still insist on wearing one, short of injuring themselves in the process.

Oddly enough, it has taken a man by the name of Gordon Thompson III to offer a number of solutions to what may be considered a woman's problem: sexy high heels she could actually stand on and walk in for more than an hour.

"Trained as an architect, I'm used to looking at situations as problems, then using design to solve them," said Thompson, creative director of Cole Haan, in a previous interview.

It also helps that before joining Cole Haan, Thompson was part of the team behind Nike's Sports Research Lab, an outfit responsible for studying elite athletes' performances to create appropriate Nike footwear.

When Gordon moved to Cole Haan, which Nike bought sometime in the late 1980s, it was only natural for him to apply Nike's famed and exclusive Air technology in his quest to design the most comfortable pair of high-heeled shoes.

During the early phase of the Nike team's study, research results showed that there was a huge opportunity (as well as a pressing, ouch, need!) to incorporate Nike Air technology into high heels.

Tests revealed that the weight transfer onto a woman's foot in a heel of considerable height is "significant." Believe it or not, her body weight comes down with the same force as it would if she were running like, say, Lydia de Vega.

Nike's research also showed that the appropriate cushioning, even if it were applied to a pair of high-heeled shoes, could counterbalance the pressure by affording the shoes some "give." The Nike Air technology, in the form of Air "bags," supplied the "perfect" solution.

Important innovation

Thompson began incorporating the technology on casual, sportier pairs of Cole Haan designs, which to this day is reportedly considered an important industry innovation as well as a huge come-on for customers.

It was only a matter of time before Gordon set his sights on an even bigger, taller—both in the literal and figurative sense—breakthrough.

The most important step was making sure that women actually felt the difference. Multiple "blind-wear" tests at the Nike lab reportedly showed that women walking around in high heels with Zoom Air consistently perceived the shoes as far more comfortable than women wearing the same heels without Air.

This year marks the first time Cole Haan is applying the Nike Air technology to its spring/summer collection of high heels and platforms, some of which have heel heights hovering close to four inches.

The collection, which includes a number of flats and medium-heeled styles as well as wedges, sandals and boots, features 14 designs plus three carry-over styles from last season.

Like in previous collections, most of the pieces are made of soft calfskin leather. In keeping with the sultry season, a number of styles come in patent leather with stacked heels wrapped in fine, nautical-inspired egg white rope.

Most of Cole Haan's women's shoes come in neutral colors with a few pairs in red or trendy metallic thrown in. Its men's line also comes in sedate colors but also with the famed Nike Air technology.

The women's line is crafted to go well with Cole Haan's current collection of big, soft, woven and unstructured leather bags designed to hold everything but the plasma TV. Cole Haan's products are made in Brazil, Italy and the US. A small number of pairs in its more affordable G-series are done in China.

No less than the "Queen of Talk" herself, Oprah Winfrey, endorsed Cole Haan's high-heeled line and swore by its quality and comfort as she interviewed Thompson in her TV show.

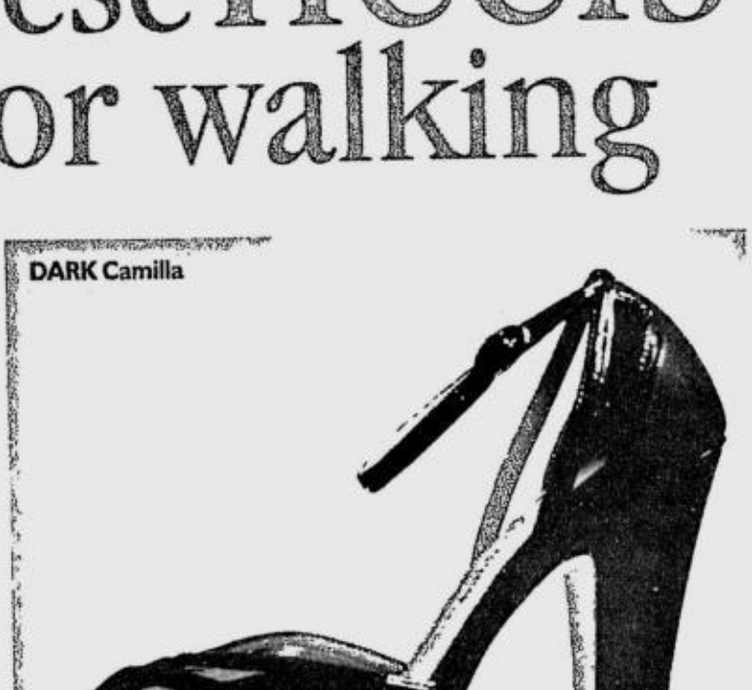
Still alluring

Of course, even the most comfortable shoes would mean nothing to hard-core fashionistas if they weren't the least bit beautiful—the shoes, that is. Comfortable or not, said Thompson, each pair still has to be alluring.

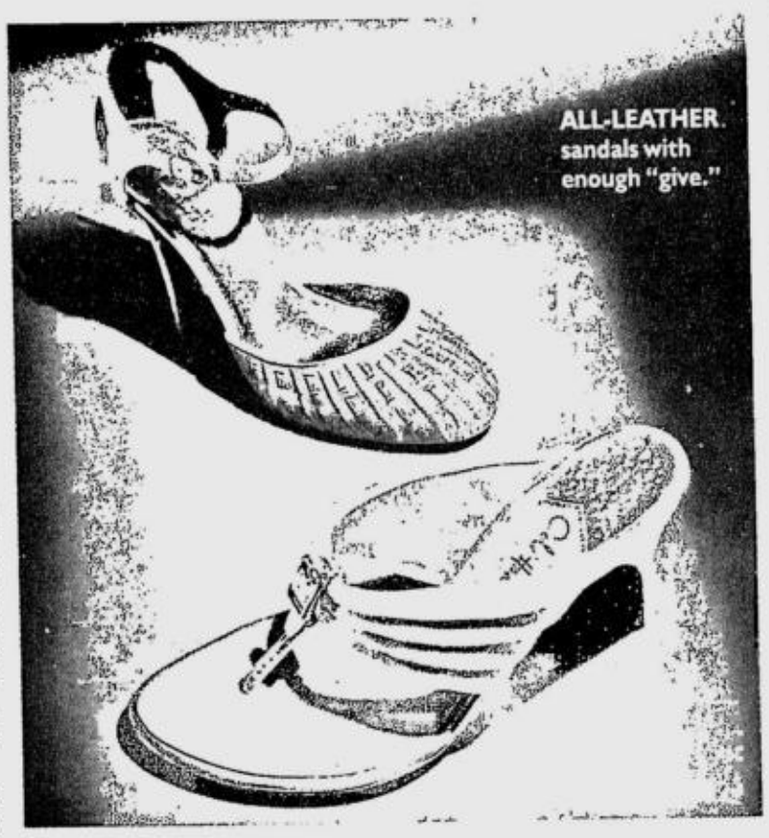
"No one will look at it unless it's sexy and makes the legs look great," he added. "My goal in creating the state-of-the-art high heel was 'no compromises.' Fashion and technology working together is synonymous to innovation wrapped in beauty."

Never mind my ignorance. If Cole Haan's latest high-heeled offerings are good enough for a tireless and high-profile celebrity like Oprah, then they must be good enough for nameless career women who want to look great.

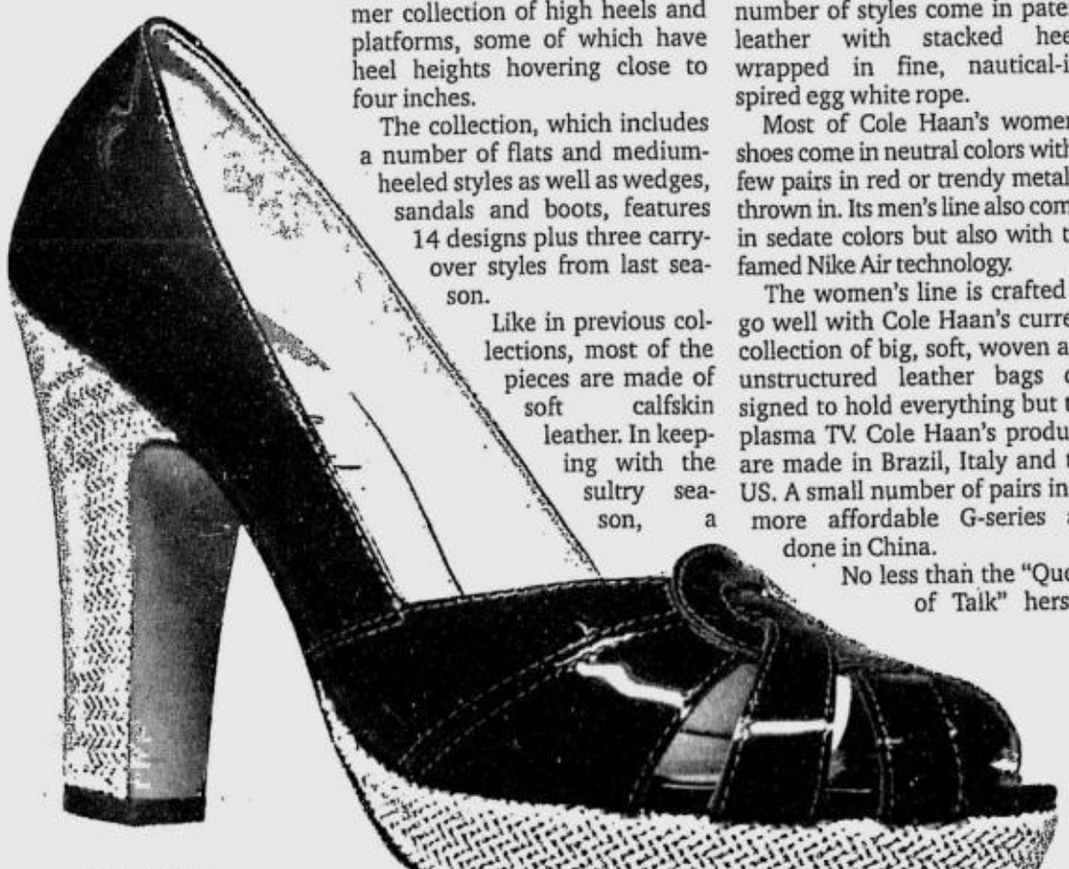
E-mail the author at avergara @inquirer.com.ph



DARK Camilla



ALL-LEATHER sandals with enough "give."



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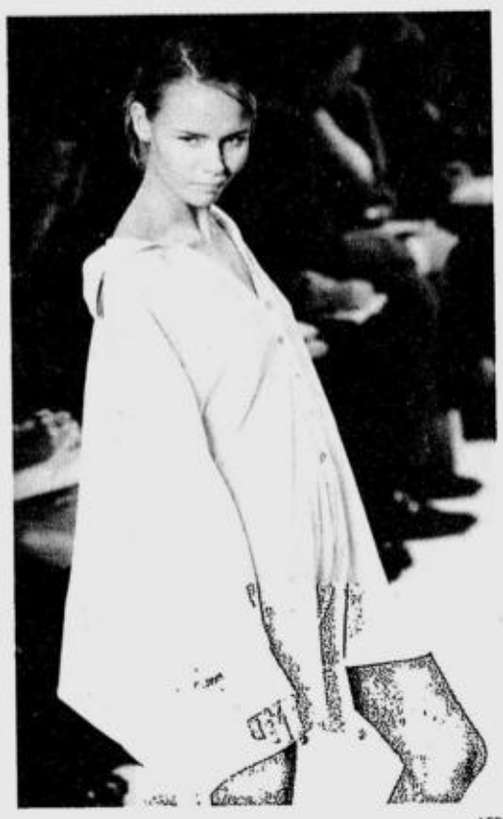
Australians stampede to grab new Stella McCartney line



AFP

HUNDREDS OF WOMEN OVERRAN an Australian department store Monday to snatch up Stella McCartney's new collection, tearing clothes off mannequins and each other in a chaotic stampede for style.

Around 300 fashion-hungry customers, some of whom queued for more than two and a half hours before the doors opened, rushed to a Target department store in Sydney where McCartney's limited-edition special collection went on sale.

"They were taking clothes off mannequins, they were just tearing clothes off other people—it was just absurd," said one bemused customer after the frenzy left shelves bare of the British designer's fashion fare.

Long queues also built up outside other selected Target stores in Australia that are carrying the collection, with shoppers stripping racks bare of McCartney items within 10 minutes of opening time.

The first retail treasures to be snatched up included silk dresses worth A$180 (US$141), but items started at A$30, witnesses said.

The 42-item special line by McCartney, daughter of former Beatle Paul McCartney, includes versions of key looks from recent collections for her own brand, redone for Target at greatly reduced prices.

"I wanted the collection for Target to reinterpret all the best ofs and must-haves' of Stella McCartney for winter and make my designs more accessible to a wider audience in Australia," she said earlier. *AFP*

AFP

STELLA McCartney collection for Target AFP

AFP

LV designer...

From page F1

in the south. It was impressive how the candidates were so articulate and, young as they were, quite sensible. In a country where they are not a seasonal but a year-round affair, beauty contests are seen as the door to golden opportunity. But what struck us was one recurrent answer of the candidates.

Asked why they joined the contest, the candidates, mostly students and budding professionals, answered that they did it for their mother who put great hopes in their future (and their beauty, of course). They were pretty clear about their life goal: good career, self-growth and better fortune, all of which are bound by an abiding faith in their parents' design for their future. How very filial.

The pageant night itself at the Waterfront was fun. **Boy Abunda**'s questions brought the house down. We've always known that Boy is the perfect show host, but his arsenal of questions that night was yet again pretty lethal; one had to be really quick on the uptake. And the candidates proved equal to the challenge.

Abunda asked one finalist what she'd say to her dad if she found out her father was gay and carrying on an affair with her own boyfriend. Without skipping a beat, the girl said: "You have good taste, Dad."

Apart from Philip, behind the contest were committee head **Petit Garcia**; Vice Mayor **Mike Rama**; and, of course, **Margot Osmeña**, who wore a Philip Rodriguez gown that night; along with Miss Universe 2005 **Natalie Glebova**, who wore a red body-clinger.

Glebova was chair of the panel of judges that included interior designer **Anton Mendoza**, who designed and gave the Waterfront suites and some rooms the minimalist Asian modern feel; and **Louie Cruz**, now the executive editor of a new magazine for Chinese-Filipino achievers, the Asian Dragon.

Crowned Miss Cebu was 20-year-old **Loise Angelique Tan**.

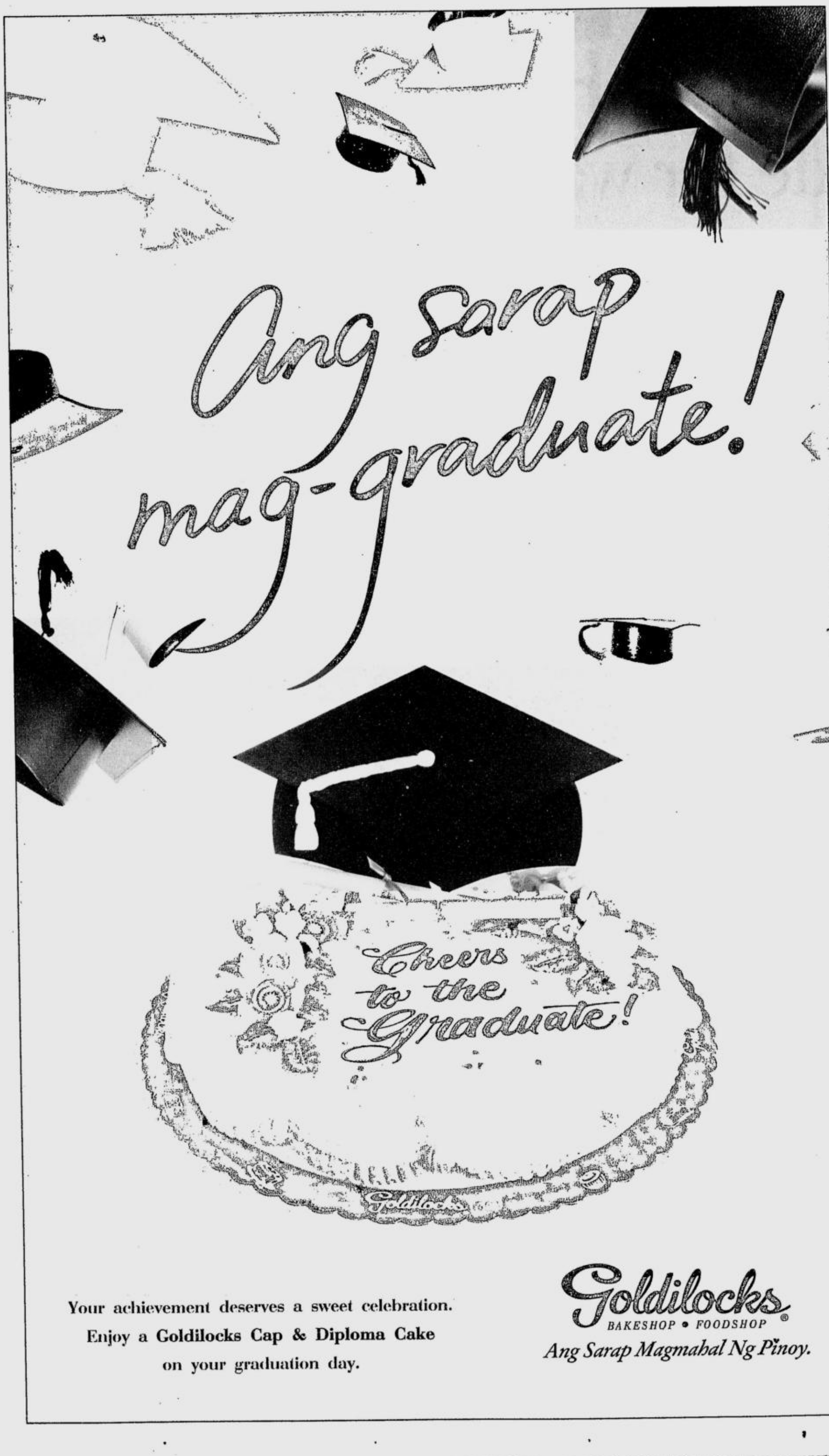
The pageant came on the heels of the Asean Summit which entailed mammoth preparations that mobilized some 3,000 volunteers. These volunteers and donors pitched in for mostly everything, from bread to flowers. Cebuanos seem different from the rest of the country—they can get their act together.

Revenge of the high-waist

If you keep your eyes open, you should notice a shift from skinny pants to wide trousers. A much better news is—the high-waist is coming back. For us who've suffered the low-rise jeans/shorts/skirts long enough, this means there's a world of options that's opening up again.

This year, consumers will have a very wide range of choices. As far as pants are concerned the shapes are a variety: cropped (perfect for the relaxed weekend), classic (slight flare), wide-leg, stovepipe or skinny, and the high-waist a la **Katharine Hepburn**.

The "new" high-waist pants skim your waist and hips but are wide enough to hide the big lower hips and thighs. There's no *puson* to hang out. It's trouser fashion for real women like you and me.



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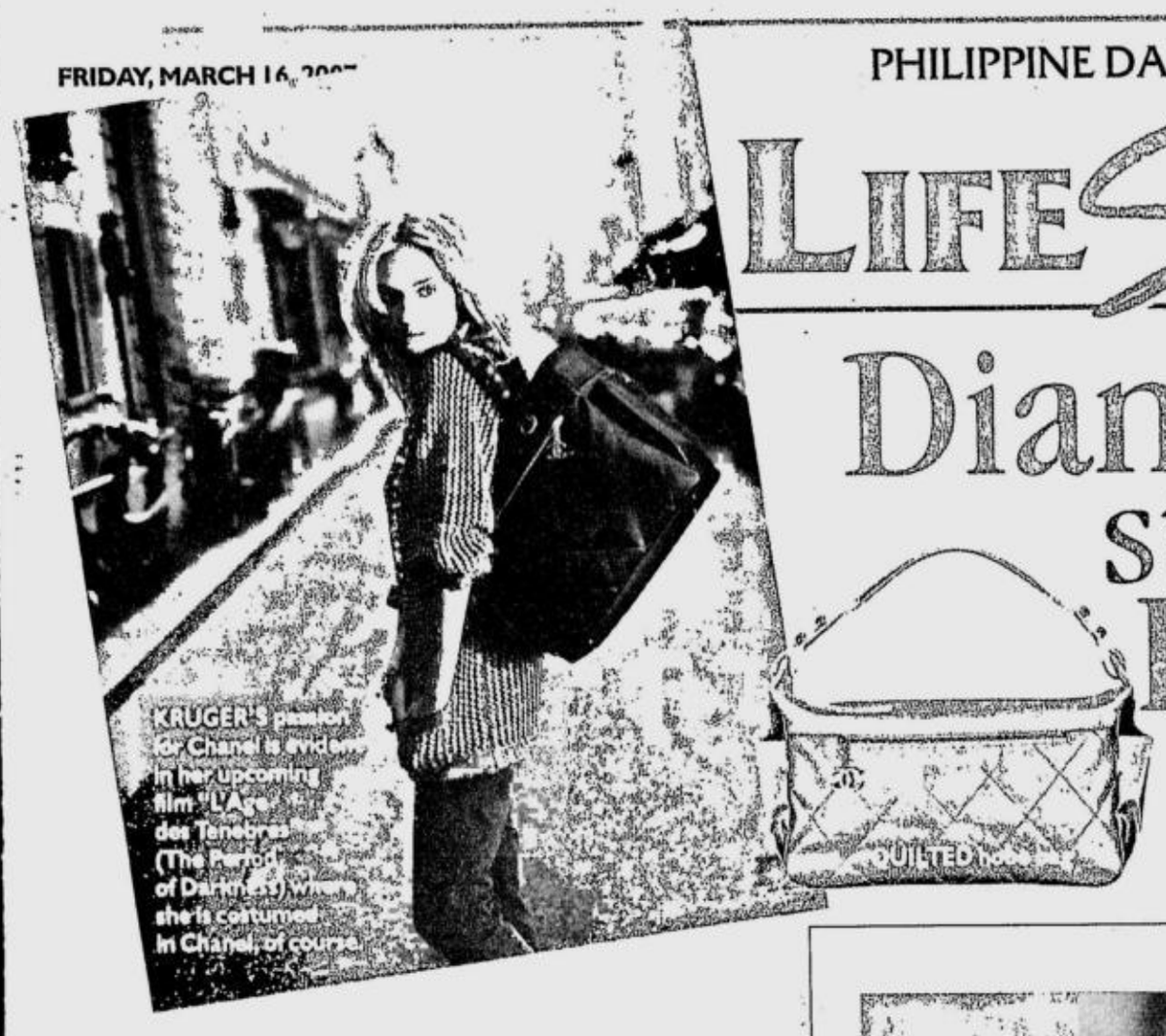


Diane Kruger stars as Lagerfeld's muse

KRUGER wears the "Franges" necklace in 18k white gold and diamonds, Chanel Fine Jewelry

By Kitty Go
Contributor

CHANEL HAS ALWAYS banked on models with very refined, almost doe-like features for their advertising campaigns. Witness Anna Mouglalis (A/W 2006, Cruise 2007), Vanessa Paradis (2004-2005) and most recently Daria Werbowy for ready-to-wear.

For the Spring/Summer 2007 "Paris-Biarritz" accessories campaign, Karl Lagerfeld has chosen former model and ballerina-turned-actress Diane Kruger, with whom he shares German origins.

Kruger has always been a Chanel client and has known Lagerfeld since her days as a model. She has always sat front row at Chanel shows and still remembers this kind gesture that the Kaiser extended even when she was a relatively unknown model. (Lagerfeld has been known to do this not only with celebrities but with fashion media. In "The Beautiful Fall," author Alice Drake writes that to this day, he still invites to his shows an elderly German woman who wrote his first feature in a German magazine.)

ACTRESS Diane Kruger wearing Chanel RTW in London

Kruger, who will host this year's Cannes Film Festival in May, has clearly not forgotten how well she has been treated and returned the favor not only by continuing to be a client but by also choosing to wear Chanel at Cannes in 2004.

In 2005, alongside Brad Pitt and promoting "Troy" where she played Helen, Kruger walked down the Croisette in a sumptuous tulle dress embroidered with camellias specially designed for her by Lagerfeld. For the screening of "Copying Beethoven" in Toronto last September, she illuminated the red carpet in a Chanel couture bustier dress with an A-line skirt embroidered with pearls.

Her passion for Chanel is evident in her upcoming film "L'Age des Tenebres" (The Period of Darkness) where she is costumed in Chanel, of course. Not since Isabelle Adjani in "Callas" has this classic and coveted brand figured so prominently in a film.

Starmall EDSA-Shaw • Starmall Las Piñas • Metropolis Star Alabang
March 16, 17 & 18, 2007

METROPOLIS ALABANG star

Date	Event	Venue
March 16 & 17	Job Fair Philippines: Trabaho Tour 2007	Home Center
March 17	Milo Best Clinic Sports Invitational Demo	Sports Center
March 18	Empress Schuck Mall Tour	Activity Area

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays: Live Band, Mark's Bar

starmall LAS PIÑAS

Date	Event	Venue
March 18	World of Colors	Books for Less

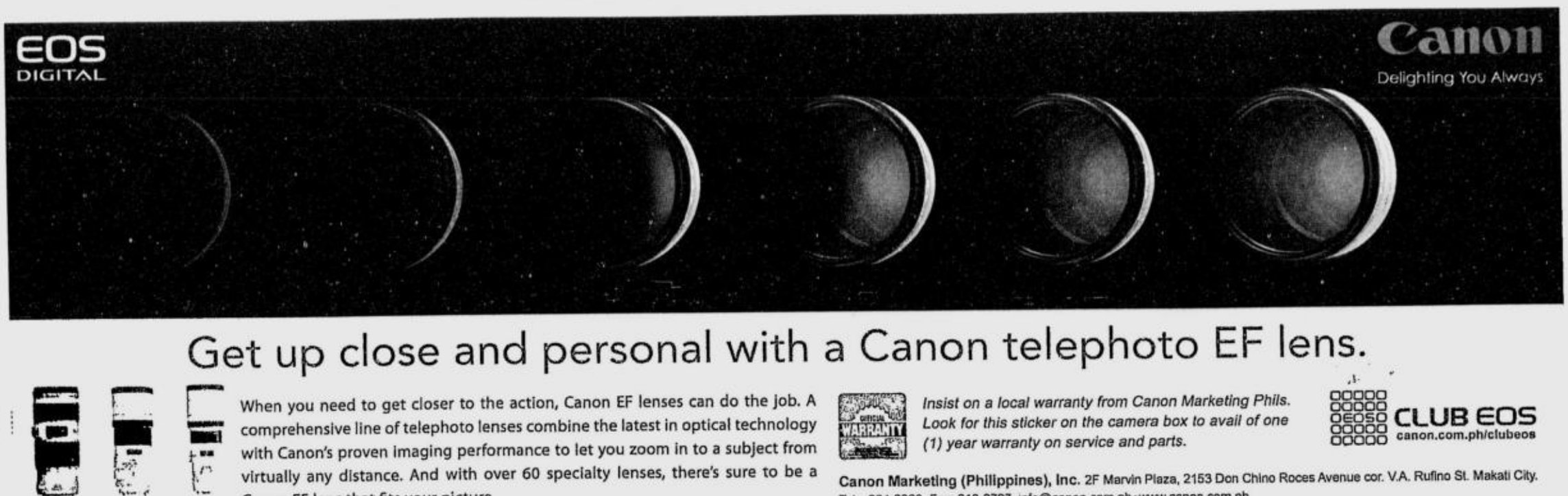
Mondays: Comedy Nights, Strip
Wednesdays: Live Music, Strip
Fridays & Saturdays: Live Music, Mark's Bar

starmall EDSA-SHAW

Date	Event	Venue
March 17	Enrique Marcos Mall Tour	Activity Area
March 18	Philippine Idol Mall Tour featuring: Mau Marcelo	Activity Area
March 18	Summer Fun Day	Books for Less

Tuesdays: Comedy Nights, Cuba Libre
Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays: Live Band, Cuba Libre

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1123. Series of 2007.



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A. LIPIN

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BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOW FILET-O-FISH CAME TO BE

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

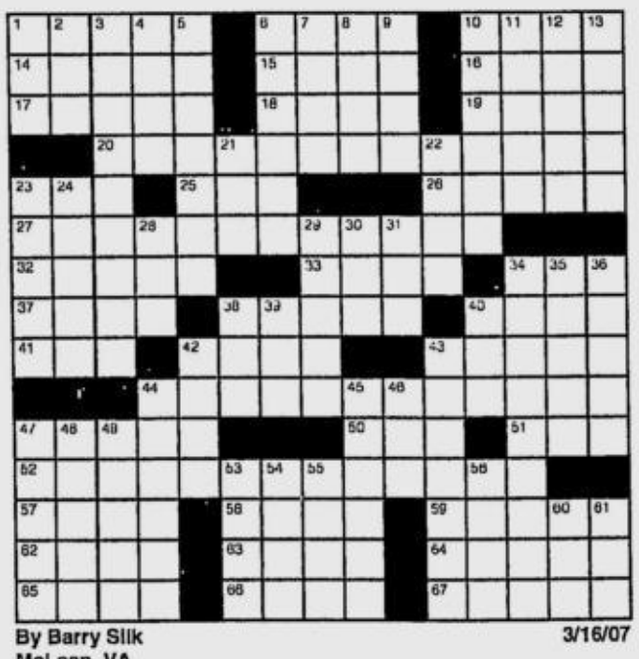
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Indian nobility
6 "Ironside" cops
10 Cornmeal dish
14 In pieces
15 Amazon branch
16 Within: pref.
17 USMC rank
18 Bankruptcy
19 McAn of shoes
20 Hall-of-famer's digital device?
23 Videotape mfr.
25 Borden's Elsie
26 Too high-strung
27 Hall-of-famer's three-pointer?
32 Musical set in Argentina
33 Turnpike turnoff
34 "__ Dalloway"
37 Gridiron rulers
38 Total confusion
40 Dove or Donne
41 Historic start?
42 Flyer's bill?
43 Silt formation
44 Hall-of-famer's beverage plant?
47 Fatuous
50 Polish
51 Mayday!
52 Hall-of-famer's face warmer?
57 "__ Sanctorum"
58 Door handle
59 Estrada TV series
62 TV's talking horse
63 Earring setting
64 Last name in Communism
65 Jiffs
66 Struck dumb
67 Ford flop

DOWN
1 '60s singer Donner
2 To the point
3 Right-angled tractor-trailer accident
4 End of a buck?
5 Neighbor of Martinique
6 Haphazard urban growth
7 __ pas
8 Strait-laced
9 Comic Carvey
10 Organic " compound component
11 Opposite of cool, man
12 Rock
13 Simpson pop
21 Opponent
22 Yorkshire fellow
23 Pipsqueak
24 Pearl collector
28 McHenry and Sumter: abbr.
29 Chicago hotel
30 Fed. budget group
31 Mantra chants
34 Cotton twill fabrics
35 Active starter?
36 Remains
38 Cartoon collectible
39 "2001..." mainframe
40 Chapel seating
42 Coffin support
43 Rout
44 Works, as dough
45 Bought off
46 Buccaneer's drink
47 Muslim holy men
48 Mother-of-pearl
49 Mexican empire of old
53 Tex. neighbor
54 Winter blanket
55 Hoopster Bryant
56 Slough off
60 Pizza order
61 NBC classic



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

3/16/07

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

S	W	O	O	P		A	N	N	E		R	A	T	S
T	I	B	I	A		B	O	O	N		E	T	A	L
A	T	O	L	L		A	M	P	S		A	O	K	I
T	H	E	S	O	F	T	E	R		U	M	P	E	D
				M	A	E		O	U	S	E			
A	M	A	T	I	S		A	B	H	O	R	R	E	D
S	A	R	A	N		A	C	L	U			A	L	A
T	H	E	J	O	B	T	H	E	H	A	R	D	E	R
E	R	N			A	H	E	M		B	I	O	M	E
R	E	A	S	O	N	E	D		L	E	O	N	I	D
			E	D	E	N		R	O	T				
D	A	N	C	E		I	T	I	S	T	O	G	E	T
O	D	O	R		G	A	E	L		O	P	E	R	A
C	I	T	E		O	N	C	E		R	A	N	I	S
S	T	E	T		A	S	H	Y		S	L	E	E	K

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3/16/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a marvelous imagination, yet at the same time, you're very down to earth and practical. You always appear self-assured and confident, regardless of how you feel inside. Your need to be active sometimes puts you in risk-taking situations. The year ahead is full of many exciting, fresh, new possibilities. Open any door!
Birthdate of: Margaret Weis, author; Jerry Lewis, actor/producer; Lauren Graham, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a strong, emotional day for you. Whatever happens, you will feel quite intensely about everything! Nothing is gray. Everything is black and white.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Research into secrets will go well today. You'll find whatever you're looking for. Nothing is too much trouble. You'll search under every rock.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A particular friendship is very important to you today. If you have a strong urge to see someone, contact this person. You will enjoy the visit.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Some of you might develop a crush on your boss today, or perhaps on someone older or richer. You seem to be very influenced by the power of others. (Possibly the reverse will occur, with you being the powerful person.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Any discussion about politics, religion or philosophical ideas will be passionate and fascinating today. You're very eager to learn something. New information excites you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You feel very passionate and intense in all your dealings with others today. You also identify very strongly with your share of something or how much you own.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You will feel your love for someone quite strongly today. New relationships that begin now will definitely be intense and memorable. You feel drawn to others as if by a magical power.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You want to clean things up at work today. You want everything to look better and run more smoothly. Your ideas for improvements are excellent and worth mentioning.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're playful and flirtatious today! Do set aside some time for fun. Sports, the theater, movies, parties and schmoozing with others are excellent choices.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Do whatever you can to make where you live look more attractive today. Get rid of what you no longer need. Throw out garbage. Buy fresh flowers.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your powers of persuasion are fabulous today. You can act, teach, direct, market, sell or convince anyone of anything. You have the Midas touch!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Take your moneymaking ideas seriously. If you can think of new sources or new ways of making money, why not explore them? If shopping, this is a good day to buy items related to bathrooms and garbage disposal.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

				3		2	9	
1				5				
9		8				7		
			7		8			
6	7			2			1	8
			6		3			
		7				5		2
				8				4
	3	4		7				

Difficulty Level ★★★★

3/16

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	1	9	5	4	7	2	6	8
2	5	7	6	1	8	4	9	3
4	8	6	3	9	2	5	1	7
5	6	2	7	8	3	1	4	9
8	9	4	1	2	5	3	7	6
1	7	3	9	6	4	8	2	5
6	3	1	4	5	9	7	8	2
9	2	5	8	7	1	6	3	4
7	4	8	2	3	6	9	5	1

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WHITE blouse with satin ribbon belt and printed skirt by Red Herring for Debenhams

ELECTRIC blue knit sweater and stretch bootleg jeans by Pineapple (above); red taffeta bustier dress with tulle inset and cocktail ring by Red Herring. All available at Debenhams

Mix-and-match heaven

DEBENHAMS, ONE OF UNITED KINGDOM'S leading retail chains, is a favorite fashion haunt of actress, entrepreneur and mom Maritoni Fernandez.

Fernandez is of British descent—the daughter of an English blue-blood and a Filipina mother. "I spent most of my teenage years in London with my *lola*," she says.

Like most young girls in London, Fernandez often managed to sneak off to what she considered her second home at the time.

"Debenhams had everything!" she says. "If I wanted a haircut and get some shirts and jeans, they were all there."

With her trips to London now few and far between, Fernandez was happy when she learned about Debenham opening outlets in Manila. "It's fun to know that there's a place I can go to get all the stuff I had when I was younger. I still feel so much at home there."

"It's always more practical to mix and match," Fernandez adds. "That's why I prefer items that I can wear in different places—to office, to a photo shoot or to dinner."

Debenhams is at Rustan's Makati and at Shangri-La Mall.

GRAY knit sweater and dark straight-leg jeans by Maine New England; printed scarf by Red Herring. All available at Debenhams

Chic chantings

THE NEW COLLECtion of Mantra is a refreshing mix of moods in bold colors, prints and textures, with touches of detailed embroidery and beadwork.

Soft, exotic fabrics with modern, artsy embellishments are seen in Mantra's sexy and feminine silhouettes.

The Mantra boutique is located at the 2/F, Shops at Serendra, Bonifacio Global City.

FLIMSY chiffon top with satin and gold trimmings matched with skinny pants. Long-sleeve tunic top with floral embroidery that dress up your leggings or jeans

WILLOWY lime green tunic top embellished with gold trimmings worn over tank top and white shorts. Black dress with eye-catching red and green embroidery and appliqué accents on sleeves and V-neckline

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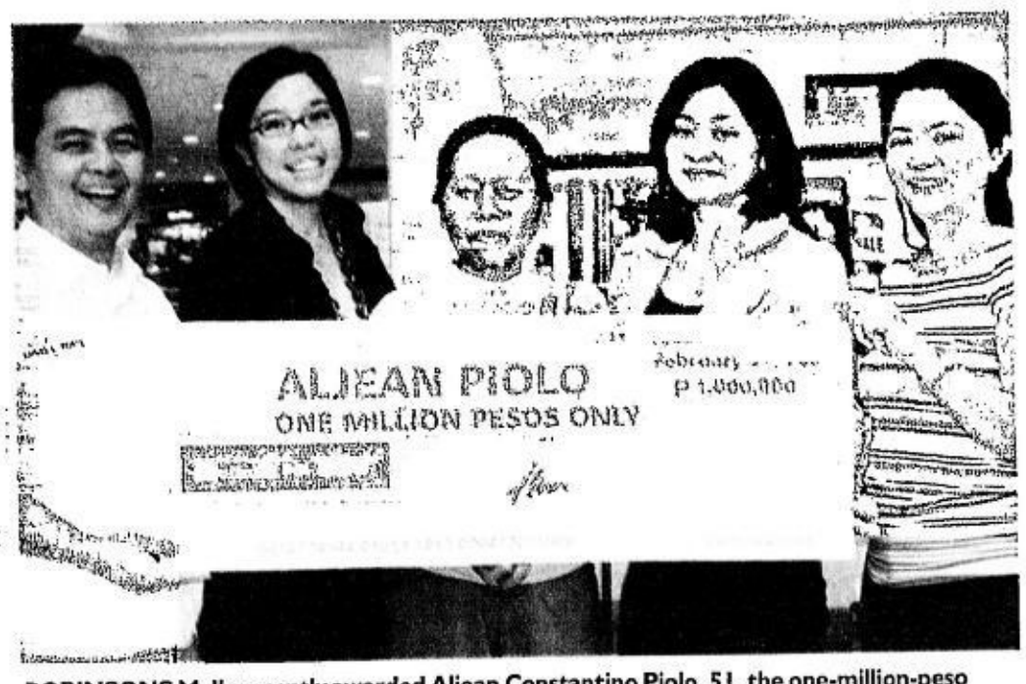

ROBINSONS Malls recently awarded Aljean Constantino Piolo, 51, the one-million-peso winner of Robinsons Malls' Holiday Raffle Promo. Photo shows (from left) Arniel Porte, Coca Cola's Trade and Promo Merchandising Head; Bonique Vinluan Robinsons Malls Group Marketing Communications Manager; winner Aljean Piolo; Eunice Gonzales, Robinsons Malls Marketing Communications Director; and Tess Miranda, Robinsons Malls National Ad and Promo Manager. The Holiday Promo was presented by Robinsons Malls in cooperation with Coca Cola Bottlers Phils. Inc., Globe Telecom and Citibank.

All-Filipino book on yoga

THE YOGA MISSION PROJECT PHILIPpines Team is launching "Yoga Philippines," a book and VCD set, on March 18, 5 p.m., at The M Cafe, Ayala Museum, in Makati City. This pioneering work is an all-Filipino produced media package that teaches beginners a basic yoga program. Yoga Mission is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to bring the practice of yoga to all Filipinos. "Yoga Philippines" is the first in a series of instructional books and videos on the subject. "Yoga Philippines" is now on sale through www.yogafound.com. Along with a Filipino version, it will also be available in retail stores starting this summer.

SALE. Robinsons Malls will hold a chainwide three-day sale dubbed "Sun, Sand and Sale," March 16 (up to midnight), March 17 and 18 (regular mall hours). Avail of up to 50-percent discount on selected items from participating mall outlets.

FASHION. Designer Rene Salud designed the chic and functional ensemble

Goings On

exclusively for the dining and kitchen staff of the newly-opened UCC Coffee Shop. The modernized kimono-inspired outfit not only complements UCC's Japanese heritage, but also the youthful and sophisticated ambiance of the shop. A white three-fourths blouse with a high collar and red piping is paired with a smooth, straight cut black slacks. It is matched with a red apron with two side pockets and black obi sash.

NEW OFFER. Sun Cellular is now offering Call and Text Unlimited Service at the lowest price ever of P25. The P25 day's worth of credits includes unlimited voice calls. Sun Cellular invests more than P11 billion annually to increase coverage and to make sure its subscribers are always connected by putting up cell sites all around the nation. Sun Shops are located in malls and other accessible places. Call 3958000. Visit http://www.suncellular.com.ph.

SUMMER CLASSES. The Nihongo Center Foundation, Inc. is now accepting applications for Japanese language courses for the summer. Call 7353179 or 8924916 to 19 for details. Visit www.nihongocenter.com.

GRAD PROMO. Miladay, the 40-year-old jewelry company offers a graduation promo until March 30. Shoppers can enjoy a 25-percent discount on all items. There's also a 0-percent interest on installment plans for cardholders of BDO, HSBC, CitiBank and Metrobank. Miladay will also unveil its "Rendezvous: The Travel Collection" on March 29 at 5 p.m. at its store on the 2/L of the Entertainment Building of SM Mall of Asia. For information, call 8950948 and 8964617.

HEALING WORKSHOP. International teacher and spiritual healer Don Hanson will conduct a healing workshop "Transforming Cellular Memory (TCM)," March 21-26 at the Blue Orchid Resort. Moalboal, Cebu. For more info, call Rebecca de Villa at 0917-5385423 or visit www.donhanson.com.

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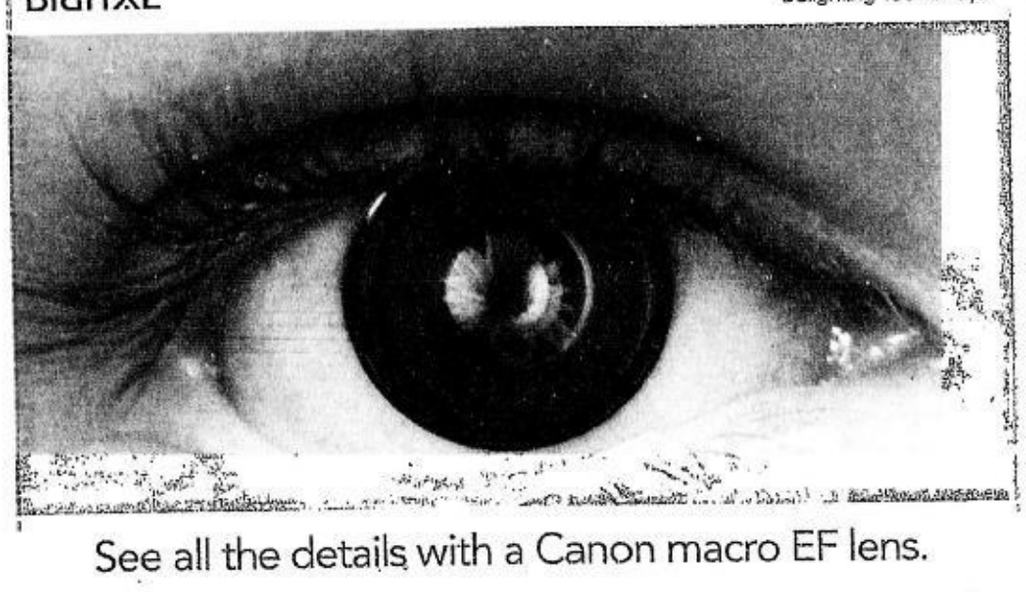

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VENTURE 7 HOLDS FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY
Venture 7 presents its initial fundraising activity for the year, dubbed "Let's Twist Again II," an informal dance affair to be held at the Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel on March 30, 7 p.m. Call 8150669 for tickets. Seated: Fortune Ledesma, project chair; Fanny Blanco, Linda Villadelgado, Chit Gohu. Standing: Lita Gelano, Pilie Aquino and Celine Bautista.

NEW MAGAZINE FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Globe Telecom has come out with a free monthly magazine that will serve as a handy reading material and reference guide to help micro, small and medium entrepreneurs grow their business. Masigasig magazine features practical business tips, important industry contacts and inspirational stories, among others. It comes with every purchase of Entrepreneur Magazine and is also available individually in all Globe Business Centers and Globelines Payments and Services Centers.

Five designers in male model search

FASHION DESIGNERS BARGE Ramos, Gerry Katigbak, Dong Omaga Diaz, And Dodjie Batu, together with Kalibo-based designers Mel Grecia Quimpo and Peter Casidsid, recently presented their latest summer-resort menswear collections in Boracay for the fourth annual "Datu Marikudo Male Model Search," held at Red Coconut Beach Front Hotel Boracay.

Dong Omaga Diaz and Dodjie Batu designed body-fit resort casuals in washed-out sea colors, while Mel Grecia Quimpo and Peter Casidsid utilized the local piña material for modern, innovative getups. Barge Ramos and Gerry Katigbak showed languid resort formals in a mix of cross-cultural inspirations. Sleek, tropical swimwear was designed by Rickie Abad, with Veranda Thong sandals by Brian Tenorio and Brazliano Praia. Allan Joseph Hofileña of Makati City and Iloilo City won the title of "Datu Marikudo Male Model 2007." The "Datu Marikudo Male Model Search" is an annual event produced by Match Events Productions headed by Bess Tonel.

This is **Mille Luce**. It's a community nestled at the highlands of Antipolo. An Italian-inspired estate surrounded by lush trees, green green grass, and perfumed with cool mountain breeze. It's home to dreamers. It's sanctuary to romance. It's life at greater heights.

Mille Luce offers four themed phases to suit your taste. Each home is exquisitely designed to suit your need. They rest above naturally contoured landscapes engineered with precision.

Outside your home, a multi-purpose clubhouse, and rows of shops and diners serenade your walk around Mille Luce as well. They bring you various lifestyle pleasures to keep you flying high.

At night, celebrate with the stars as you gaze upon the lights of Metro Manila. Only a place high enough can let you enjoy this.

Live Life at Greater Heights only at

Mille Luce
Antipolo

How to get to Mille Luce :

Via Marcos Highway- From Marcos Highway, turn right at the intersection (Masinag Market should be on your left). You're now on Sumulong Highway. Turn right on Circumferential Road. Go straight, then turn right when you reach the first Triangle mark. Go straight again, turn left when you see the second Triangle mark. Go straight. (You will arrive at an intersection with Shopwise on your left and Seven-Eleven right across it). Turn right to M.L. Quezon Avenue. Turn right at Mille Luce drive and you're there!

Via Ortigas Extension- From Ortigas Avenue, go straight all the way to Ortigas Extension. Turn right when you reach the Circumferential Road marked by a Triangle. (You'll arrive at an intersection with Shopwise on your left and Seven-Eleven right across it). Turn right to M.L. Quezon Avenue. Turn right at Mille Luce drive and you're there!

Call 718-1093 to 94
www.crownasia.com.ph

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

sms feedback: Inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

CASTING COUP. John Travolta, William Macy and Tim Allen as bikers

Two 'hogs' hit it off

By Janet Susan R. Nepales

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—THE PROSPECT OF two actors with radically different backgrounds working together was an unlikely one—until "Wild Hogs" came along.

The casting of Tim Allen, star of several hit studio movies, and William "Bill" H. Macy, acclaimed actor in mostly indie films—plus John Travolta and Martin Lawrence—resulted in a top slot at the box office during opening day the other weekend.

"Wild Hogs" is about four adult men experiencing midlife crisis who decide to escape it all via a

TWO/H2

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Jeannie Dizon-Posas, General Manager, Dizon Farms

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Ticket Price THX: P161 131 Indie Sine: 101 632-9116

1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD • THX
12:00 3:20 6:40 10:00

2 300
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 PATHFINDER
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
1:05 3:15 5:25 7:35 9:50

5 DREAMGIRLS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 SIQUIJOR
1:35 3:40 5:45 7:50 10:00

8 indieSine: COMPOUND
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

9 YOU GOT ME
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

10 HAPPY HEARTS
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

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MARCH 14 to 20, 2007
indieSine, Robinsons Galleria

A stunning visual achievement, COMPOUND is a contemporary thriller that deals with the complexities of love, wealth, and fear. A perfectly unexpected and well-executed ending make this a film not to be missed.
- Cleveland Intl. Film Festival

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- Paul Dano, Philippine Daily Inquirer

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2 SIQUIJOR
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

3 DREAMGIRLS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

4 HAPPY HEARTS
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00

5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00

6 300
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

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Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 DREAMGIRLS
12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

2 300
12:55 3:40 6:25 9:10

3 YOU GOT ME
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

4 HAPPY HEARTS
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

5 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

7 PATHFINDER
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

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4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 YOU GOT ME
6 300

PIONEER

Ticket Price: P100 687-5378

1 300
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

2 PATHFINDER
1:25 3:50 6:15 8:40

3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40

4 DREAMGIRLS
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

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4 BABEL
5 YOU GOT ME

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3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 YOU GOT ME
5 MUSIC and LYRICS

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3 HANNIBAL RISING
4 HAPPY HEARTS
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6 YOU GOT ME

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4 ROME and JULIET
5 THE HITCHER
6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

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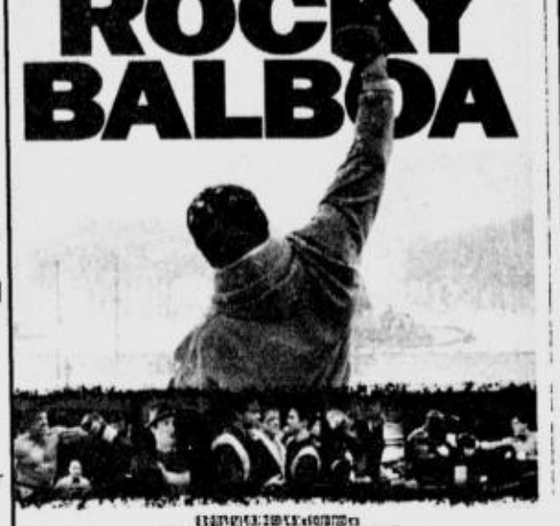

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SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
SAN MIGUEL Coca-Cola IMAX
SUPERMAN RETURNS 3D
8:00PM Admission Fee- P250
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2D
11:30AM Admission Fee- P200/ P250
T-REX IN 3D
2:00PM 2:30PM 5:00PM 6:30PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER
PREMIERE CINEMA
YOU GOT ME
CENTERSTAGE
300
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
BECAUSE I SAID SO
CINEMA 2
DREAMGIRLS
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 DREAMGIRLS
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 BATAD
4 GHOST RIDER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 300
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 HAPPY HEARTS
9 SIQUIJOR
10 DEAD PEOPLE 2
11 PATHFINDER
12 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PATHFINDER
4 300
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 SIQUIJOR
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
12 BATAD

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 PRIMEVAL
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 GHOST RIDER
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 PATHFINDER
8 HAPPY HEARTS
9 BECAUSE I SAID SO
10 SIQUIJOR
11 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12 BATAD

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 PATHFINDER
4 SIQUIJOR
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 BATAD
9 YOU GOT ME
10 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PATHFINDER
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 SIQUIJOR
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 SIQUIJOR
4 300
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 YOU GOT ME
8 GHOST RIDER
9 BATAD

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 300

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 EPIC MOVIE
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 SIQUIJOR
12 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4223201-04
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 EPIC MOVIE

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 THE HITCHER
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
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2 300
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 PATHFINDER

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PATHFINDER
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 300
6 YOU GOT ME
7 HAPPY HEARTS
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 300
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 HAPPY HEARTS
5 YOU GOT ME
6 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 NUMBER 23

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 300
2 BATAD
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 THE HITCHER
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 EPIC MOVIE

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 300
2 IT'S A GIRL BOY THING
3 YOU GOT ME
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 NUMBER 23

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9037681-85
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 300
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 YOU GOT ME
5 NUMBER 23
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 MUSIC ANG LYRIS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 FLUSHED AWAY

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 THE HITCHER
2 RESERVED
3 300
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A GIRL BOY THING
6 HAPPY HEARTS
7 RESERVED
8 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 PRIMEVAL
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 THE RETURN/ MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 PATHFINDER
2 300
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 300
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER
6 YOU GOT ME
7 HAPPY HEARTS
8 SPIRIT TRAP

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010 NOW OPEN
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVINSIBLES
4 YOU GOT ME

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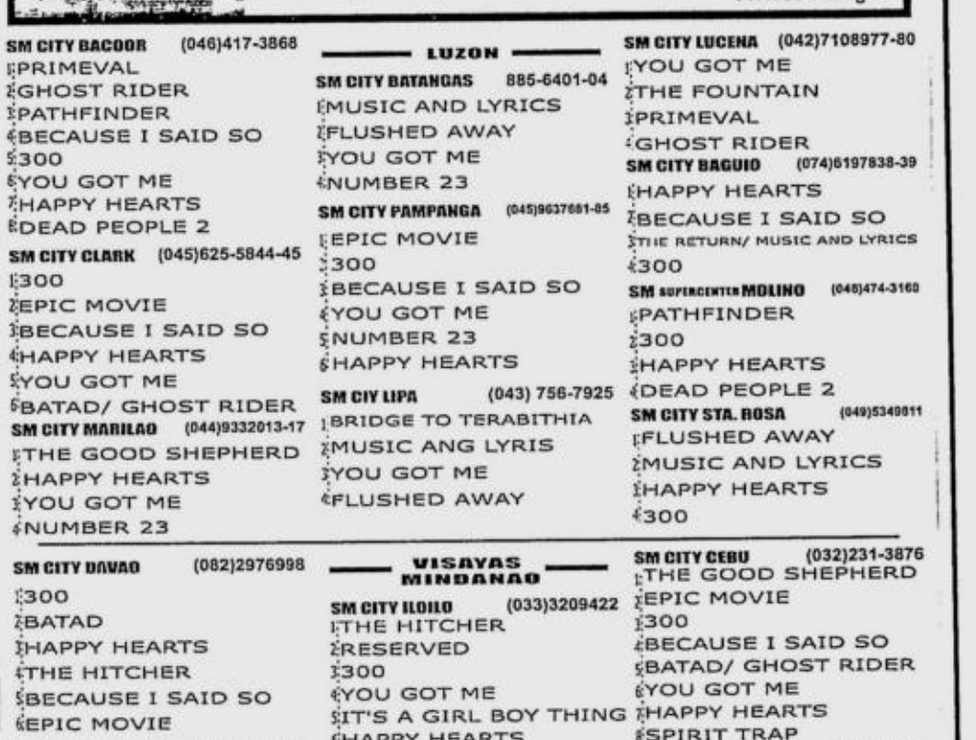

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Two 'ho

road trip on their Harleys.

"These guys have never sw with each other," Walt Becker, directed the comedy, told IN Entertainment. "They were not even friendly outside the movie set until this project. So it was kind of nerve-wracking for me. But as soon as filming started, they were kidding around and having fun as if they had known each other for 30 years."

Indeed, who would have thought that the surprise casting of Allen ("Toy Story," "The Santa Clause" movie series), Oscar and Golden Globe nominated Macy and Travolta and Martin Lawrence ("Big Momma's House," "Bad Boys") in a movie would lead to a box-office bonanza?

Becker admitted that having these actors together was "like having four frat brothers in one room." Although the quartet bonded quickly, Becker revealed it was Allen and Macy who "usually ran away with the Harley bikes together during breaks. Every time we turned around, they were gone driving off."

"I really had fun doing this movie," Allen said in a separate interview. "We were like brothers ... trying to outdo each other, taking a shot at the other guy. Every one had strengths and soft spots but all the guys were spiritual people, men with big hearts, really kind men. There clearly was respect for one another."

Lucky two

Asked if he ever experienced midlife crisis, Allen replied: "I have been very lucky. I travel. I love cars. I have a lot of projects that I work on. I have never experienced that. I am not saying I am immune to it but at this stage in my life, I haven't."

Macy also said, "I am blessed. I have never experienced midlife crisis." He said his character Dudley Frank, a fumbling single nerd, has no midlife crisis, either, "[But] his life is a crisis!"

The highly respected actor is aware that he is sometimes jokingly referred to as "the husband of Felicity Huffman." It used to be the other way around, with the pre-"Desperate Housewives" Felicity often introduced as "the wife of William H. Macy." But they are supportive of each other's careers and have humorously acknowledged these appellations.

Becker said the only time his actors asked more questions than usual was when the four guys had to jump into a pond—naked. In the end, one of them ceased worrying.

"Tim, John and Martin kept asking how high the water would be," said Becker. "Everybody had a zone for the water. What was really interesting was Bill Macy having no qualms at all about being butt naked in the scene—while everybody else went through some kind of body image thing."

According to Becker, Macy even prepared a special "wild hog" pouch for his privates as a surprise for the guys when the actor stood in front of them on the rocks, his naked behind facing the camera. "[It was] really hilarious," Becker said.

Better body

Explained Macy: "I have a better body than all of them! I did it (took off his clothes) on stage many years ago," said Macy. "It is not new to me. It is a great thing to do. It is empowering. Probably the first time you do it you are scared. But the next time ... you say to yourself, everyone in this room has something to hide, except me."

He continued: "I did 'The Cooler' butt naked with Maria Bello in this play in Chicago. In fact, every time I got lucky, my date at the time would wink and say something like, 'I saw you in this play!'"

Allen pointed out that, although he had ridden Japanese and European bikes before, this was his first time on a Harley-Davidson. "We were trained for several weeks by a professional," he related. "I got comfortable. The Harley is a great bike—big and powerful."

Macy also admitted being a newcomer when it comes to driving a Harley. "I quickly discovered why men develop a

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gs' hit it off

From page H1

rked who JIRER

Harley habit. Once you are on it, there's this feeling of freedom and living on the edge. I am hooked!"

As for acting styles, Becker disclosed that while Allen was good at improvising and ad libs, Macy, a stage-trained actor, preferred to rehearse a scene and follow the script to the letter. "It was crazy for Macy in the beginning because he was not used to it. But he got used to it," Becker bared.

MACY loves the Harley!

Macy confessed, "I was nervous about this thing. These are stand-up guys used to doing their own thing and changing the lines. It was chaotic but that's the way they do it; I just had to go with the flow."

Allen explained that the most difficult part was not jumping in the pond or slapping the bull but ending the filming. "That was the worst because we were all having fun and we all bonded."

Macy agreed, "We bonded like there was no tomorrow."

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G1 GLORIETTA	1 HAPPY HEARTS	2 300	3 SIQUIJOR: MYSTIC ISLAND	4 PATHFINDER
G4 GLORIETTA	1 BECAUSE I SAID SO	2 PATHFINDER	3 THX DREAMGIRLS GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 NOTES ON A SCANDAL	5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	6 300	7 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
GB1 GREENBELT	1 300		2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	
GB3 GREENBELT	1 THX DREAMGIRLS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PATHFINDER GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BECAUSE I SAID SO GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS		2 DREAMGIRLS	
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	5 PATHFINDER	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 300	2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	4 EPIC MOVIE
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 HAPPY HEARTS		2 SIQUIJOR: MYSTIC ISLAND	
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 300	5 PATHFINDER	

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Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents GAY BIRDS at REP's Globe Theater - March 16 to April 1, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
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Two-time Best Burp winner to host Kids' Choice Awards

SINGER/ACTOR JUSTIN TIMberlake, two-time Best Burp Award winner and 2007 Nickelodeon's Kids Choice Awards (KCA) nominee, will host the 20th annual event on March 31.

Once again, kids honor their favorites from the worlds of film, music, sports and television in a star-studded live, milestone telecast from UCLA's Pauley Pavilion. Nickelodeon's no-holds-barred kudos/mess fest will mark two decades by breaking the slime barrier.

KID FIT

This year's list abounds with dual nods such as "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" for Favorite Movie and its star, Johnny Depp for Favorite Male Movie Star. "Ice Age: The Meltdown" got a solid pair for Favorite Animated Movie and Favorite Voice from an Animated Movie (Queen Latifah as Ellie the Wooly Mammoth), as did animated flick "Over the Hedge" and Bruce Willis (voice of RJ the Raccoon). "Drake & Josh" and "The Suite Life of Zack and Cody" and their respective stars Drake Bell and Cole Sprouse made the list for Favorite TV Show and Favorite Male TV Star. Beyonce is nominated for Favorite Female Singer and Favorite Song ("Irreplaceable"); "SpongeBob SquarePants" for Favorite Cartoon and Favorite Video Game (SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab).

This year's and last year's hosts, Timberlake and Jack Black, nabbed nominations respectively for Favorite Singer and Favorite Movie Actor. "Charlotte's Web" wove a nomination for Dakota Fanning as Favorite Female Movie Star and Julia Roberts as Favorite Voice from an Animated Movie ("The Ant Bully").

"I'm thrilled and proud to be hosting the 20th anniversary show," said Timberlake, a winner of three Kids' Choice Blimp Awards for Favorite Musical Group ('N Sync-1999) and Best Burp (2003 and 2006). "There's nothing like Kids' Choice for 'un-adult-erated' fun. While honoring kids' opinions, it taps into the kid in all of us."

A more candid and funny Hugh Grant

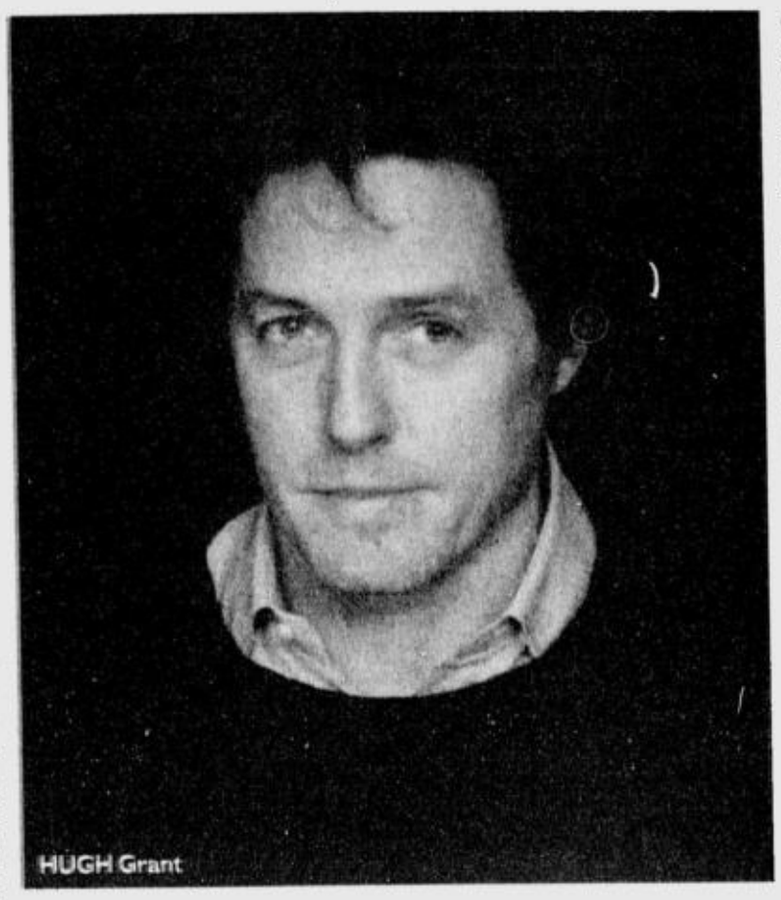
LOS ANGELES—"I TOLD DREW (BARRYMORE) AS I took my shirt off, 'Here come those tired old tits again.'"

This was one of the amusing statements in a recent press con of **Hugh Grant**, who was a lot more relaxed, candid and funny than the last time we interviewed him. He seemed to be chafing from being misinterpreted then, so he was very guarded this time.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD
Ruben V. Nepales

Speaking for his romantic-comedy with Drew Barrymore, "Music and Lyrics," Hugh made for an entertaining interviewee with his self-deprecating humor. It's the British wit and eloquence that was in grand display during the last awards season, especially during the Golden Globe Awards, when Hugh's compatriots, **Helen Mirren, Sacha Baron Cohen** and **Hugh Laurie**, were impressive in their acceptance speeches.

The press con in New York for "Music and Lyrics," where Hugh, playing an '80s pop star has-been, dared to sing, dance and even play the piano, took place before his ex, **Elizabeth Hurley**, married businessman **Arun Nayar** in India. Shortly after the interview, Hugh broke off with his girlfriend, socialite **Jemima Khan.**


HUGH Grant

You were quite brave to show your chest in one scene with Drew.

They lit me very carefully for that scene (laughter). I wore an immense amount of body tan. I remember panicking a couple of weeks before that scene came up. I did an awful lot of Pilates in my room. I was not happy at the prospect of it. I told Drew as I took my shirt off, "Here come those tired old tits again (laughter)." They have been out before and really, at 46, I should just keep them to myself.

Your character is a has-been '80s pop star. Are you afraid of being called a has-been someday?

I don't think I'd mind. I am quite looking forward to being a has-been. As my character says at the beginning of the film, "I'm a happy has-been." I think I myself would be.

Is the term "has-been" also used in England?

Maybe it's used more here, like the word "loser," an insult in America. But it doesn't really exist in England. People quite like losing in England. Everyone supports the underdog. Whereas here, if you lose, you're a nobody.

Personally, what do you think of the term?

I don't think a human being should be judged by his success, particularly the present success. The fact that people achieved anything should be good, and folks should give them a certain amount of respect for that.

The people you might classify as has-beens, whom I've met... I sometimes bump into Simon Le Bon at parties. He still does his thing and does it quite successfully but he's clearly not the star he was in the '80s. But the big thing is, he's got such a big sense of humor about it. When he gives his concerts now, he gets a bit tired. Sometimes he has to sit down to deliver a song and I think that's growing old gracefully.

Did you go to a lot of dance clubs in the '80s?

I suppose I must have done some dancing. Amyl Nitrate, I remember that. Everyone was taking Amyl Nitrate for a brief phase in London in the mid-'80s.

What were you doing in the '80s?

In the '80s, I remember being quite happy. I didn't really get miserable until about 1991 (laughter). I quite liked being young and acting was quite fun in those days because they were pretty crappy jobs. But I was thinking, well, it doesn't matter. I am not doing this for very long and it's fun. I am earning lots of money and there are pretty girls. It's not going to last forever. I went to foreign locations. I did not have a lot of money growing up so even going on airplanes and staying in hotels seemed like a thrill.

I certainly didn't take the job very seriously so it was all just for me. It was just raw material for stories to amuse my friends with. I remember thinking I was quite enjoying life. I was also doing that comedy show I did with two friends called "The Jockeys of Norfolk." That was incredibly satisfying because we wrote and performed it and it was a success onstage. When we did it for television, it was an abject failure.

So what happened in the '90s?

Age, pressure, success definitely. I don't like pressure. It was very nice to have that success with "Four Weddings and a Funeral" but the pressure then to be paid tons of money and to have a great big Hollywood film open on my back is a lot to deal with.

I know that sounds like ridiculous moaning if I'm being paid all that much money and I suppose it is ridiculous. But it's pressure and I like a very easy life. I am really only happy on holiday. I like no pressure except to think, "Shall we go to this beach or that beach?"

You describe yourself as miserable, grumpy.

Oh look, I am not that miserable (laughter). I'm a little bit intense and anxious on a film set because I am so nervous of it going wrong. I think comedy is so delicate. It's either funny or it's not funny. Very often, it's just incredibly precise, particularly something like what Marc writes.

There are zinger one-liners and there is a way to time them. If it's not funny, it's humiliating on a worldwide scale plus. I've said this many times, the mechanics of filmmaking are very old-fashioned. Nothing has really changed since the '20s and it's really slow. I do two minutes of the film a day from a thousand different angles, a thousand different takes and it's mind-numbingly boring. So it's a combination of terrifying and boring and that does make me a bit intense on a film set.

You are always paired with someone who's like a ray of sunshine—Drew, Renee Zellweger, Sandra Bullock—to lift your spirits.

(Laughter) Well, I think, yeah, I don't think I could ever be closely associated with someone who was a "miserablist" like me (laughter). No.

You sang, danced and played the piano in this film for the first time. Were you afraid that you would make a complete fool of yourself?

I was terrified. I can't think what got into me. I was just worn down in the end by Marc Lawrence. He kept bullying me for years about this project and I kept saying, "Look, forget it. I don't like music. I am not interested. The whole thing about a songwriting couple is boring."

Then we were chatting about it one day and the idea of the lead character being an '80s has-been seemed very funny. I may have been drunk. I said, "Yeah, let's go for it." And then I remember telling some friends about it. They all said, "You're completely insane. Of all the people in the world who would try to play a pop star, you would be the worst."

So it was very scary and yet strange because I am a very timid actor. I don't take any risks. It was the music part that I actually ended up enjoying the most in the film. I think we all need new stimuli. ***(More on Sunday.)***

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.

HE REMEMBERS doing "some dancing" in the '80s.

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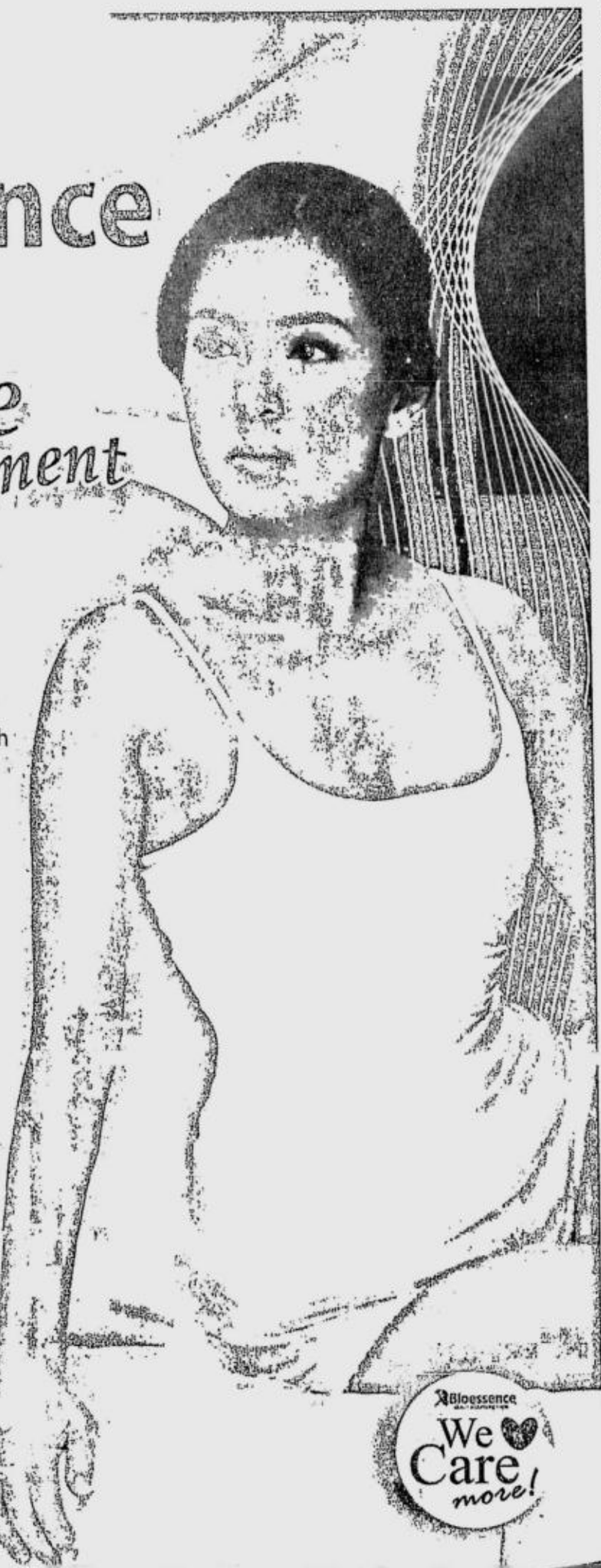

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DOLL from Kazakhstan, where she competed

ALL OF 170 Barbies and counting. "I buy dolls in each country I visit: Singapore, US, Dubai, Qatar, Russia. All the countries have representatives."

Dollhouse for a champ

Sheryn Regis lives in a star-studded community, and her own home is a valley of Barbies

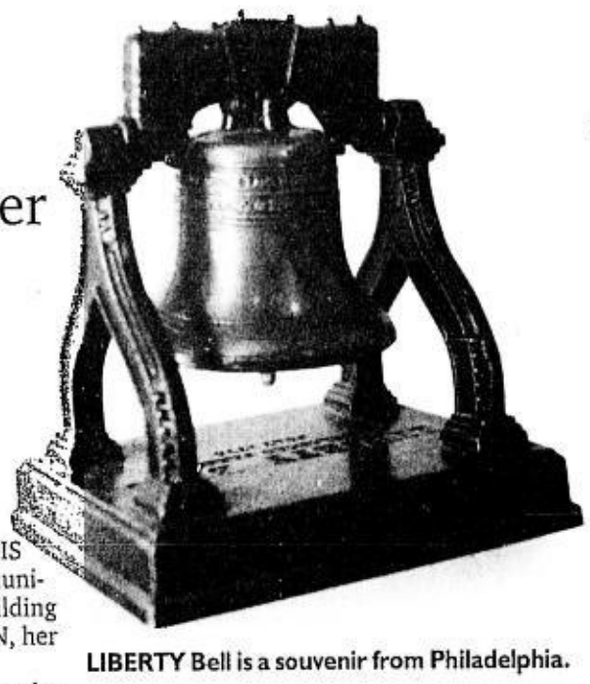
By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by August de la Cruz

THE MASTER bedroom, which she calls a baby's room, features Disney Princess and Barbie pillow covers and bedspreads.

THAI dancers from a Bangkok visit

BARBIE bust, the centerpiece of her collection

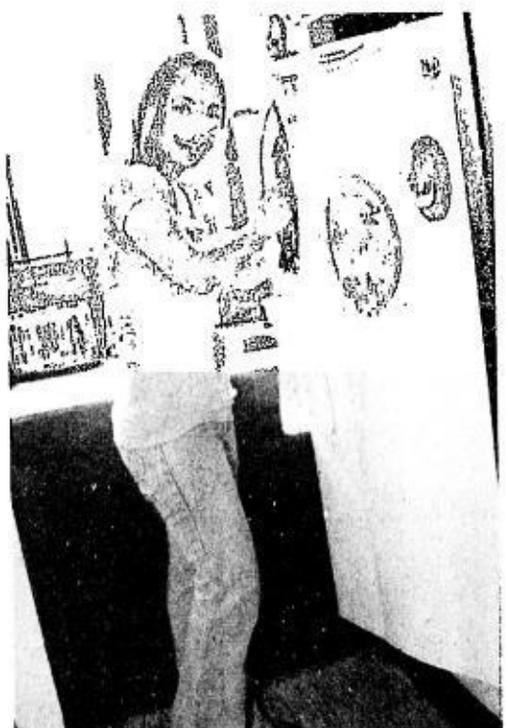
MOTHER and child by Sheryn



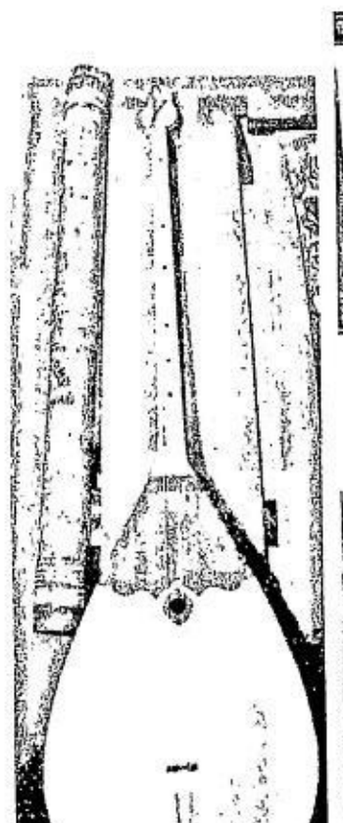
LIBERTY Bell is a souvenir from Philadelphia.

MOVING up the condo unit's spiral staircase

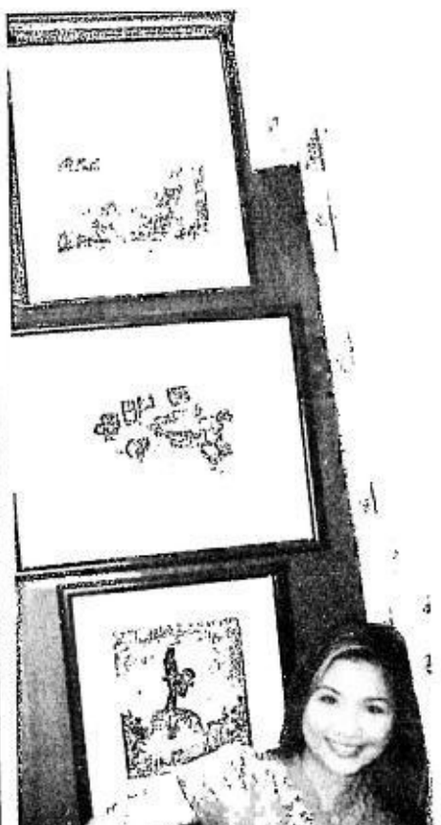
LIVING room, which was given a makeover on "At Home Ka Dito," displays her Platinum and Gold record awards.



SHERYN hams it up by the ref. Kitchen windows offer a view of Quezon City, including the ABS-CBN building.



BAMBOO rainmaker is from Palawan; guitar, from Kazakhstan.



THREE of Sheryn's watercolor paintings hang in the dining area.

HOME BODY

SINGING CHAMP SHERYN REGIS lives in a star-studded community—actually, a condominium building just a stone's throw away from ABS-CBN, her home network.

Right next door lives Piolo Pascual. Down the hallway is Redford White's unit. On another floor, Andrew Wolff and Judy Ann Santos.

In spite of its proximity to the studio and, therefore, work, Sheryn's unit is "home sweet home." The Cebuana singer's wish is for it to stay "relaxing, just like our home in the province, which I miss very much."

Her loved ones—musical director-husband Earl and four-year-old daughter Sweety—have moved to the city to keep her company.

Sheryn is also kept smiling by her extensive collection of dolls. "I have 170 Barbie dolls so far," she says.

Her favorites are the Dolls of the World series (South Africa, Greece, Russia) and the "Lord of the Rings/Galadriel" edition bought during a shopping spree at the Mattel store in Los Angeles.

Some are gifts from friends. Fellow champ Christian Bautista gave her an "American Idol" Barbie. Not to be outdone, "Star in a Million" batch-mate Erik Santos gifted her with a California Barbie.

Sheryn also has a closet full of Disney Princess collectibles, of which the most cherished is Little Mermaid. After all, she recorded the theme song of "Marina," a local mermaid *fantaserye*.

The petite singer admits that her fondness for dolls can be traced to her childhood. "Times were hard and we couldn't afford dolls," she recounts. Ever creative, the young Sheryn fashioned homemade dolls from empty bottles. "I'd paint faces on the bottles with my mom's nail polish (mom was a manicurist.) Sometimes I'd also put a veil on the doll's head."

Later, Sheryn taught herself how to paint (in watercolor) and sketch (charcoal).

Some of the pieces are displayed at home. She has given fellow singing champ Rachelle Ann Go a charcoal portrait as birthday gift.

"The colors in my paintings reflect my mood at the time I make them. It's therapeutic," she explains.

When she's not doing gigs, hosting "ASAP '07" or doing promo work for her latest CD "The Modern Jukebox Collection," she'd rather stay holed up in her condo. She paints, surfs the Net, vocalizes on the Magic Sing, has fun on the Playstation Portable and plays with Sweety. "I'm a homebody," she says.

Sweety isn't into Barbie, though. "My daughter prefers Bratz and Dora."

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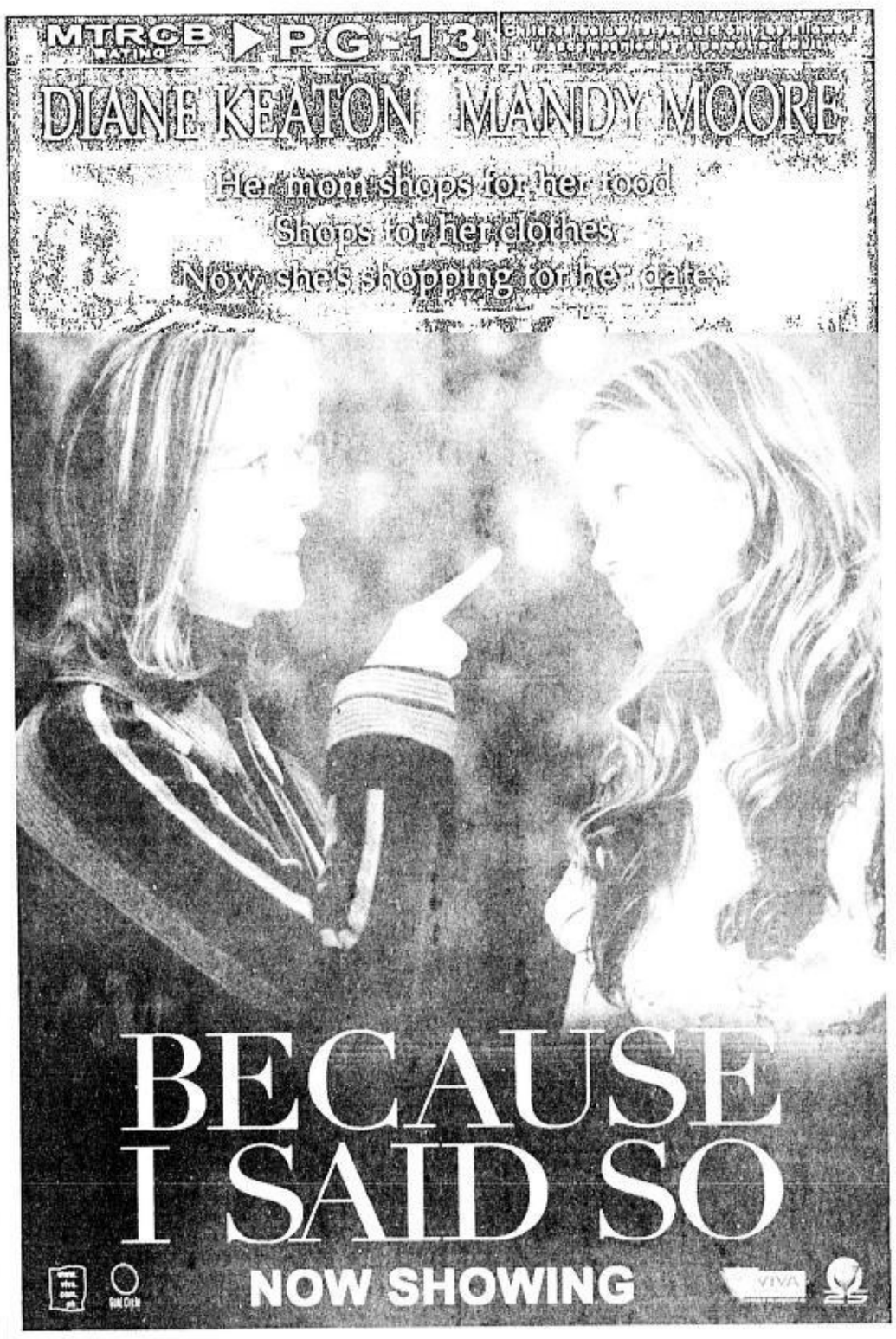

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300 R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	GOOD SHEPHERD R13 1:20,4:35 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS G 7:50,10:20	300 R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

3 PATHFINDER
MTRCB R-13
12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

4 DREAMGIRLS
MTRCB PG-13
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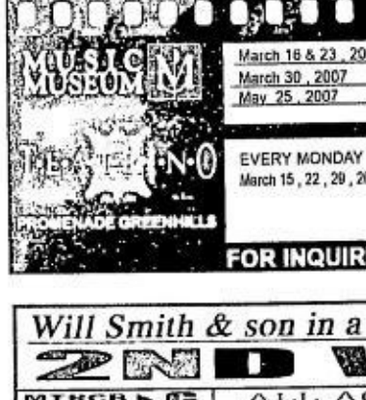

WINNER Will Smith Best Actor
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CARMI MARTIN

I LOVE READING BOOKS. SOMETIMES I juggle four at a time but, always, three are inspirational/spiritual in nature. In show biz, I am exposed to all sorts of temptations. Reading these books, I can nurse my spirit—sort of a bonding time with myself. Sometimes it's even like talking with God. I'm now reading "Life Management for Busy Women" by Elizabeth George. The subtitle is "Living out God's plan with passion and purpose." This one teaches me about time management and also offers tips on saving one's earnings and nurturing one's relationships.

Bayani San Diego Jr.
PHOTO BY RYAN LIM

JAYR

I HAVE AT LEAST 11 DOGS AT HOME. MY MAL tese Princess just gave birth. I also have two Chi huahuas named Oscar and Paris that I'm tryin to breed. Lastly, I have two Golden Retrievers Goldie and Rocky. I have displayed framed pic tures of Princess and Rocky by the stairs. I buy a least 20 kilos of dog food a month. The helper take care of them and give them weekly baths. I take them to the vet regularly. They're always th first to greet me when I get home. They're al ways excited to see me. My housemate Jimmy Muna is into aquariums. He has turtles and koi angel, janitor and puffer fish.

Bayani San Diego Jr.
PHOTO BY RUDY ESPERA

'Factory Girl' preem in London

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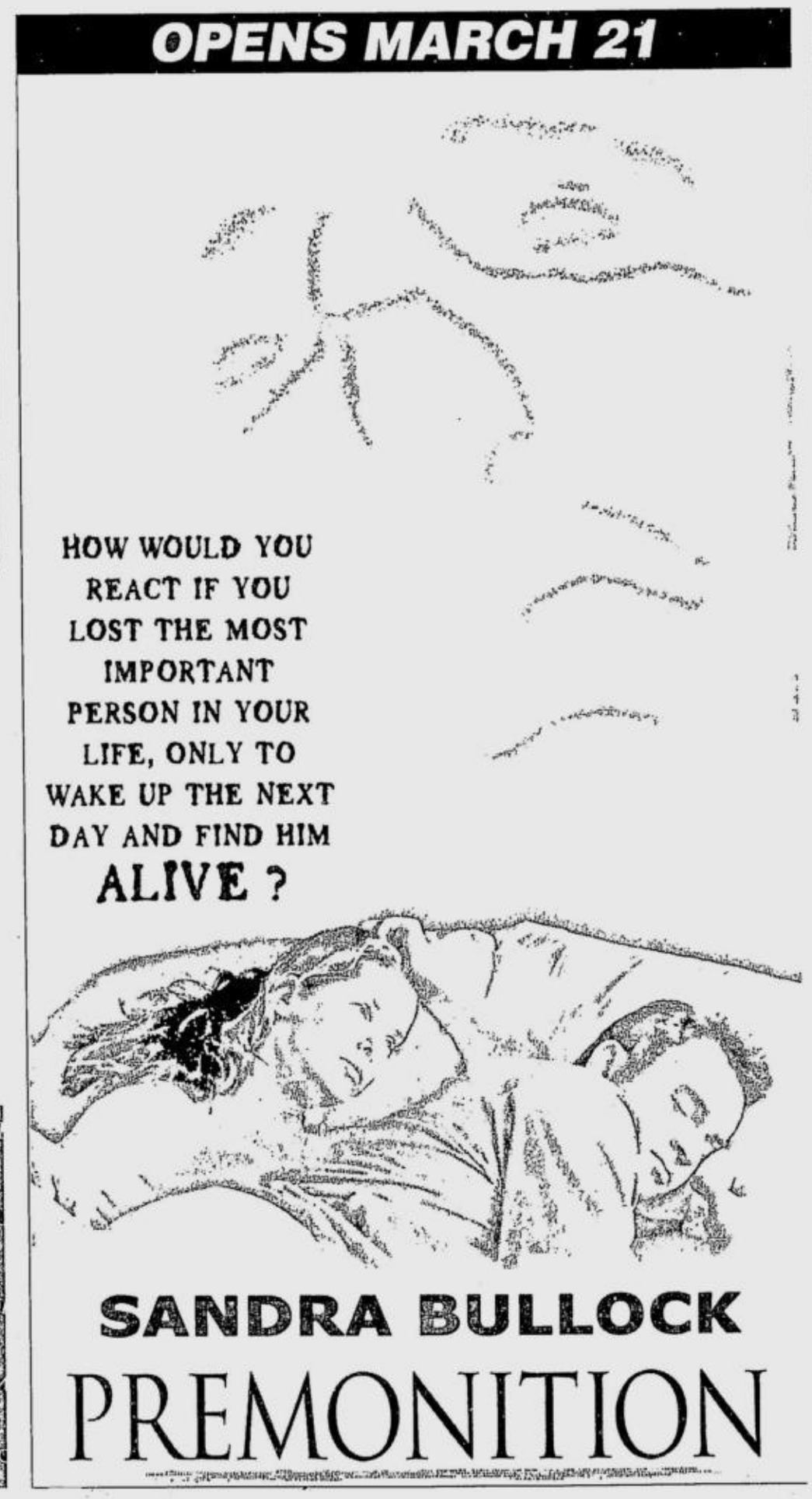

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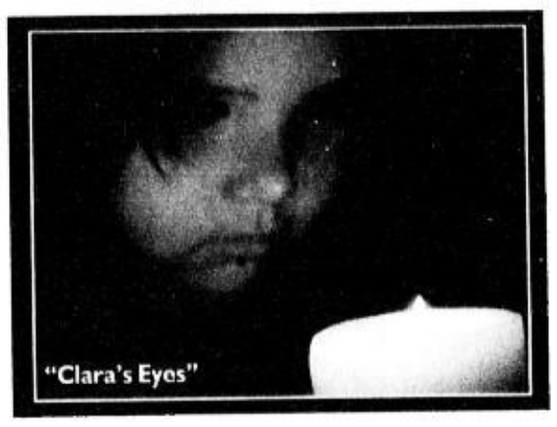


HOBBIES

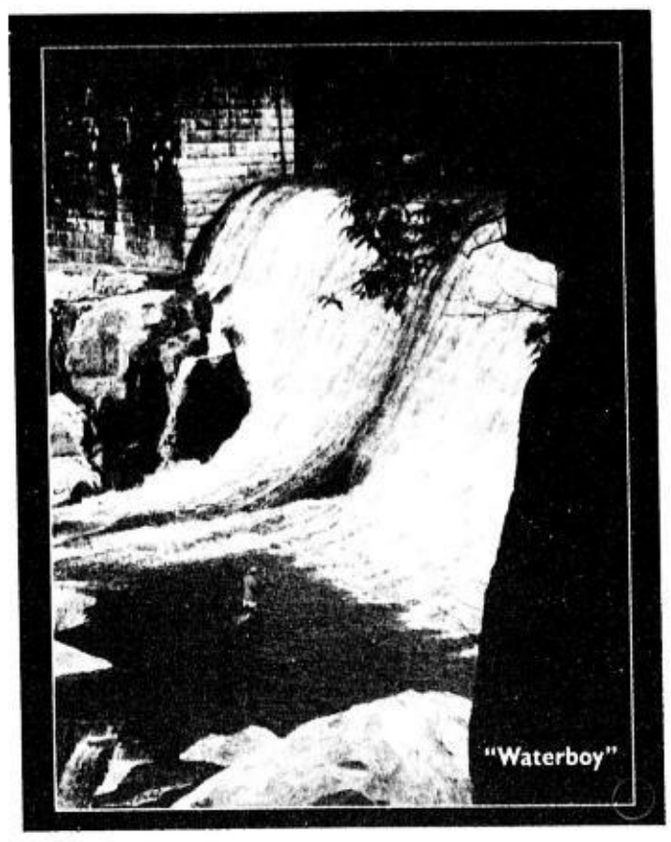
FrancisM

MUSIC ARTIST/TV HOST FRANCIS MAGALONA IS APPLYING FOR MEMBERship in the Camera Club of the Philippines, the country's oldest photography club.

As a "probee," he does odd jobs for the club members—take their pictures during events, help display entries to the club's monthly competitions, etc.

Magalona sees photography as a natural extension of music videos, which he directs: "In music videos, I tell a story in three minutes; in photography, I should do that in a single shot."

Here are samples of his work. He is sending us more next week.



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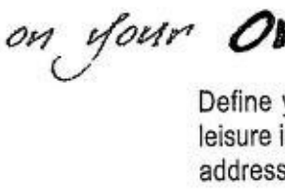
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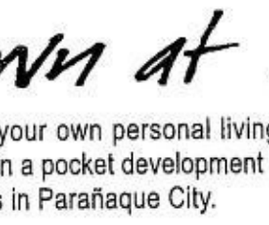
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BUSINESS/ B1

Balance-of-payments surplus in February raised total surplus to $1.28B

WORLD / A23

China enacts its first law to protect private property explicitly

NEWS/ A2

Davide elected vice president of key UN agency

METRO / A21

Parricide raps vs editor junked; prosecutor infers wife killed self

Joker yearns for good old days of campaigning

By Gil Cabacungan

JOKER ARROYO, THE OLDest senatorial contender, yearns for the campaign seasons of yore when candidates showered voters with T-shirts and caps and

JOKER/ A11

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Saturday, March 17, 2007 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 98 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

DPWH lawyer ties Ebdane to lampposts scandal

By Jhunnex Napallacan and Jolene R. Bulambot, *Inquirer Visayas*

CEBU CITY—THE NAME OF DEFENSE SECRETary Hermogenes Ebdane came up in the ongoing investigation into the allegedly overpriced decorative lampposts and street lights installed in four Metro Cebu cities for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit last January.

DPWH LAWYER/ A17

Satur arrested at SC

Solon accuses AFP chief of 'recycling' skeletons

By TJ Burgonio and Leila B. Salaverria

EIGHT DAYS AFTER HE DISAPpeared, militant lawmaker Rep. Satur Ocampo yesterday made good his promise. He emerged in public—and into the waiting arms of the police.

But he had a mouthful to say before members of the Manila Police Department served him a warrant of arrest for the alleged killings by communist rebels of military spies in Leyte 22 years ago.

The Bayan Muna lawmaker accused Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. of using the bones of other dead people and putting them into mass graves to make it appear that he and other leftist leaders were responsible for their deaths.

"The mass graves he was talking about were not genuine," Ocampo told reporters.

Police served the arrest warrant on Ocampo when he showed up at the Supreme Court to ask it to quash the warrant and stop all proceedings against him.

It was the third time in 31 years that Ocampo, a longtime leftist fighter, had been arrested by security forces.

Outside the court compound, some 25 policemen, holding shields and sticks, scuffled with about 100 banner-waving Bayan Muna supporters, who had staged a lightning rally for Ocampo at the court's gate on Padre Faura Street.

Several protesters and policemen were hurt.

SATUR/ A19

WANTED: Rep. Satur Ocampo walks right into the waiting arms of his wife Bobbie Malay and of the police as soon as he arrives at the Supreme Court compound on Padre Faura Street. RYAN LIM

Esperon wants CPP outlawed

By Christine O. Avendaño

ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF GEN. HERmogenes Esperon Jr. called for the outlawing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and admitted that the deployment of troops in depressed Metro Manila areas was part of the counterinsurgency campaign.

The defunct Anti-Subversion Law (Republic Act No. 1700) made the Communist Party of the Philippines illegal and penalized membership in the party and similar organizations. Its repeal in 1992 resulted in the CPP's legalization.

With the repeal, former and current CPP members are deemed not engaged in a criminal act as long as they do not carry arms or call on others to do the same to overthrow the government.

Speaking at the Manila Overseas Press Club the other night, Esperon boasted the government would be able to cut by half the strength of the New People's Army—currently pegged by the military at 7,000—and make it irrelevant by the time President Macapagal-Arroyo steps down in 2010.

"The President herself is confident that we would be able to put an end to insurgency by 2010," Esperon said at the MOPC forum at the Intercontinental Hotel in Makati City.

He said the military had crafted a strategy dubbed Bantay Laya, which aims to intensify

ESPERON/ A9

Palace allies hit US: Look who's talking? Hearing one-sided, meddling, a blackmail

By Leila B. Salaverria, Cynthia D. Balana and Juliet Labog-Javellana

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ YESterday bridled at the suggestion that the US government limit its military aid to the Philippines because of the latter's human rights record, saying it amounted to blackmail.

"In a way that is blackmail," Gonzalez told reporters at the Department of Justice, referring to the suggestion that cropped up on Wednesday during a hearing of the US foreign relations subcommittee on Asia that is looking into the unabated political killings in the Philippines.

Gonzalez also said in an interview with ANC television that Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer's question about the US government linking its military aid to the Philippines' human rights record showed that she had prejudged this country.

"That is already like making judgment that all our efforts are not sincere," he said.

But he told reporters that while he did not want military aid cut, there was little the Philippines could do if the US government made that decision because the latter was holding the purse strings.

"Alam naman natin yan (We know it). That's natural for the US to [thumb its nose at] its vassals and the people who are getting help from it," he said.

Gonzalez also said the US inquiry was unfair: "What I'm saying is that it's one-sided because the complainants were all heard but we were not heard. I think the Americans, being the fountainhead of democracy as they claim, should not condemn us before [hearing] our side. They have condemned us immediately."

In Tacloban City, two senators seeking reelection under the administration's Team Uni-

PALACE/ A19

A LEAP TO GREATNESS: A dynamic leader, Ramon Magsaysay flung the Palace doors wide open to the common man.

Son remembers 'The Guy'

By Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 50TH death anniversary of my father and namesake, and interestingly enough, it is also the end of my second term as senator after 12 years.

Lately, I find myself analyzing what motivated me to run for the Senate in 1995: Was I merely challenged to try something new? Was it a reaction to what I had observed as a private citizen: the many kinks and shortcomings of government and officials that manage its huge bureaucracy? Or was I simply fueled by a de-

SON/ A17

FREDDIE ROSARIO/CONTRIBUTOR

PLAYTIME: US envoy Kristie Kenney takes time to figure out the Pinoy version of chess ("dama") during a visit to Legazpi City on Friday to inspect the weeklong humanitarian mission dubbed "Goodwill-Kaibigan" being conducted by American Marines in cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

COA: P419M CARP funds used for food, phones, travel

By Jocelyn R. Uy

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE spent a hefty P419 million on fancy mobile phones, cell phone lines, prepaid cards, clothes, medicines, sumptuous meals and unnecessary travels instead of the improvement of farmers' lands in 2004 and 2005, according to a Commission on Audit report.

The amount was part of the P20.162 billion taken from the forfeited Marcos secret Swiss deposits to bankroll the activities and projects of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Implementing Agencies (CIAs) to benefit farmers in those two years.

The CIAs are composed of 19 government agencies, including the Departments of Agrarian Re-

COA/ A19

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SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/16/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Davide elected to key UN post

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES HAS REASSUMED THE VICE presidency of the Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc), a major organ of the United Nations, the Department of Foreign Affairs announced yesterday.

Newly appointed Philippine ambassador to the UN Hilario Davide Jr. was elected by acclamation last March 5 by the 54-member council, one of UN's principal bodies that deals with international socioeconomic issues and formulates policy recommendations to member-states and the UN system.

Davide took over the Ecosoc vice president's seat which was vacated by his predecessor Lauro Baja Jr.

"Your act is a clear demonstration of your faith in my country, the Philippines, as your partner in pursuing and achieving the solemn mandates entrusted to the Ecosoc and of your trust and confidence in me, your most junior colleague in the Council," said Davide in brief remarks after his election.

The DFA quoted Ecosoc President Dalius Cekuolis of Lithuania as saying that with Davide's election, the latter will also assume Baja's responsibilities as chair of Ecosoc's Coordination Segment which coordinates the activities of the various functional commissions under its jurisdiction.

The Coordination Segment was also in charge of leading the negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad), and the World Trade Organization for important meetings set in March and April.

The Philippines was a member of Ecosoc from 1992 to 1997.

In October last year, it topped the Ecosoc elections marking the first time the country achieved such distinction in an election to a major organ of the UN.

Last Jan. 17, Baja was elected Ecosoc vice president in his capacity as permanent representative of the Philippines.

It was earlier reported that the Philippines lost the Ecosoc seat to Japan as a result of Manila's decision to recall Baja.

But this was denied by the Philippine Mission.

In a report to the DFA, the mission said that Baja offered the position to Japan shortly after he received orders reassigning him back to Manila as special envoy for interfaith matters.

However, when informed that Baja acted on his own, Japan's envoy to the UN Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, who initially accepted Baja's offer, immediately expressed his full support for Davide.

According to DFA, the supposed loss of the key UN seat was announced through a "fabricated" press release issued to various news outlets in Manila and New York on Feb. 24, two days after Baja stepped down as permanent representative.

The same press release said Filipinos in the UN as well as the Filipino-American community in the East Coast protested the untimely recall of Baja as it meant the loss of the Ecosoc vice presidency.

The Philippine Mission clarified that it did not issue the press release and that the two Filipino staff members at the UN, including Jessie Rose Mabutas, the highest-ranking Filipino in the UN system, denied issuing the statements attributed to them.

BATANGAS IN DAVAO
Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte receives a souvenir Batangas knife called "balisong" from Team Unity senatorial candidates Ralph Recto as another candidate, Joker Arroyo, looks on. The occasion was the 70th Araw ng Dabaw fiesta celebration yesterday. BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

No impeachment questions, please

By Norman Bordadora

NO IMPEACHMENT QUESTIONS, please.

Former Senate President and Genuine Opposition (GO) campaign executive Ernesto Maceda told reporters at a recent press conference in Davao City that it was not appropriate for their senatorial candidates to answer questions on whether or not they would support the impeachment of President Arroyo in the next Congress.

Maceda, accompanying GO candidates in sorties through Southern Mindanao, said the opposition senatorial candidates would become senator-judges in an impeachment court if a complaint is filed in the House of Representatives and is successfully transmitted to the Senate.

"If they answer that question, they might be asked to inhibit themselves from the impeachment proceedings because it will appear that they have already prejudged the case," Maceda explained.

Maceda revealed that the impeachment of the President is still very much on the opposition agenda for the next Congress.

Maceda said the GO is putting together a "160-strong" team of congressional candidates nationwide to make sure an impeachment complaint is transmitted to the Senate once it is filed against Ms Arroyo in July.

'GO blitz' is new tack for unwieldy opposition

GENUINE OPPOSITION CAMPAIGN officials yesterday decided to change tack and allow their senatorial candidates to conduct sorties on their own.

The change in strategy, dubbed "GO blitz," calls for candidates to cover areas they have not gone to before, interact with local groups and face local media to gain exposure said outgoing campaign manager, San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito.

The change in strategy came with the assumption of Sen. Sergio Serge Osmeña as campaign manager.

"This is a different strategy aimed at improving the chances of those who are lagging in the surveys," Ejercito said in a news conference at the GO headquarters in Mandaluyong City.

Ex-senator John Osmeña, one of the GO candidates, had expressed some frustration that a lot of time was wasted just waiting for each other during joint sorties.

"Sometimes the others arrive late, sometimes they are in another town when we are in this town, and when they leave they take the media with them," he said, without giving names.

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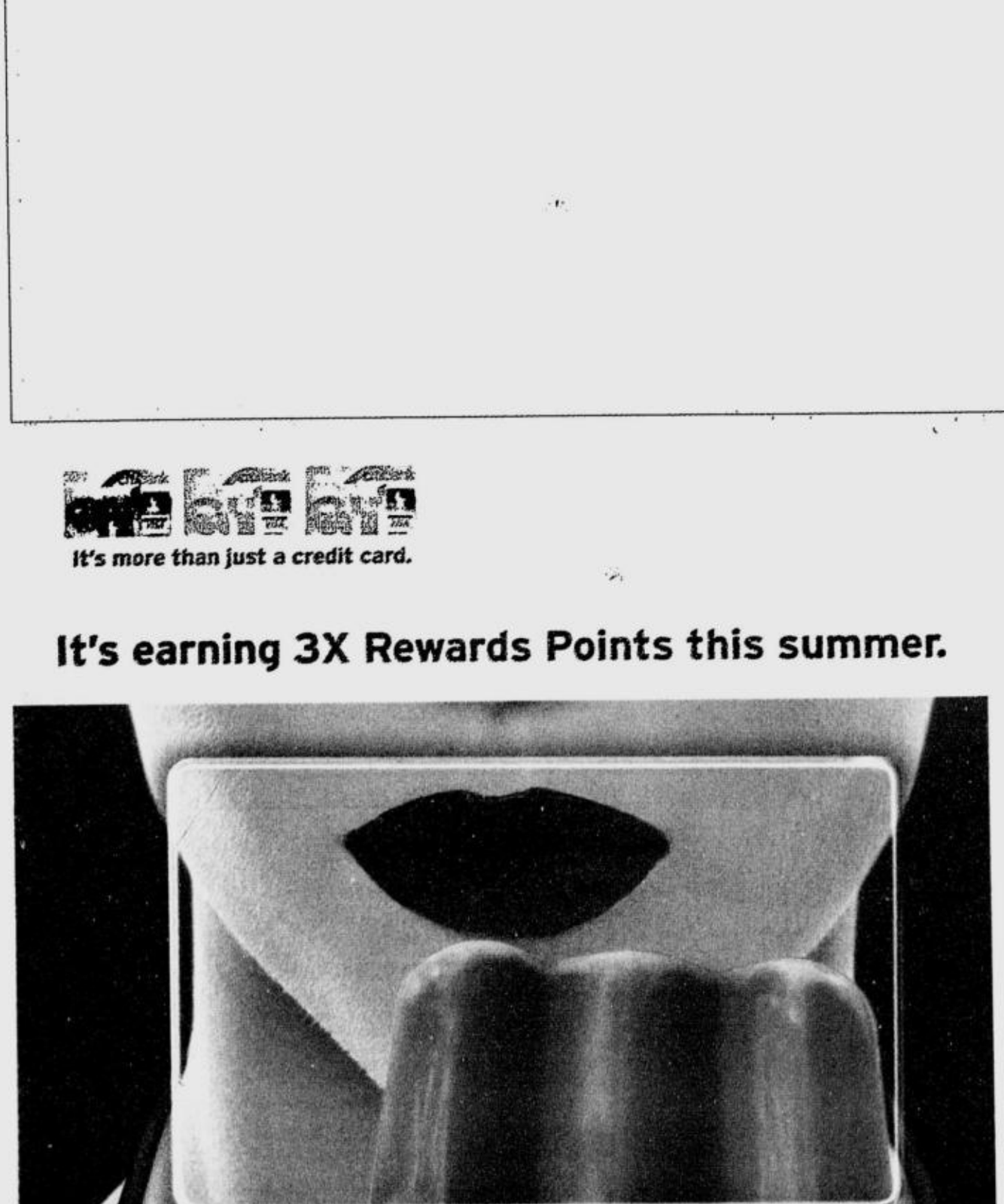

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BAD BLOOD, MONEY GRIPES

Lakas-Kampi feud behind Unity woes

By TJ Burgonio

FUNDING PROBLEMS BROUGHT OUT IN the open by Team Unity senatorial bets Cesar Montano and Sultan Jamalul Kiram III are just the tip of the iceberg in the worsening feud between administration coalition partners Lakas-CMD and Kampi, according to campaign insiders.

An administration source said bad blood between the country's two biggest political parties has strained on the ruling coalition's financial resources. Too many administration candidates at the local government level is diverting funds intended for Team Unity's senatorial bets.

"What we budgeted for one area has doubled because Kampi has decided to field its own bet in the area. A peso used to support a Kampi candidate is a peso less for the Lakas coalition. With all of our funds getting tied up at the local level, there are fewer funds available for the senatorial bets," said a source from the administration who refused to be identified.

Montano earlier threatened to quit the senatorial race because of lack of logistical support. Montano had agreed to be the last-minute replacement for the original TU 12th candidate Leyte Gov. Jericho Petilla reportedly after being assured of substantial financial support.

Kiram also aired similar gripes about the lack of TU funding to boost his campaign.

Genuine Opposition senatorial bet Panfilo Lacson said he had also heard that the Lakas-Kampi feud has spread out the coalition's resources so thinly that the vaunted administration machinery that TU was counting on to offset the popularity of GO bets was unlikely to have an impact in the senatorial elections.

"What is clear is that Kampi, under the direction of the First Gentleman (Jose Miguel Arroyo), is only interested in sealing the majority in Congress and not the Senate because the main concern is to kill any attempt to revive the impeachment case against the President," said Lacson.

Cayetano messing up Cayetano campaign

By Christian V. Esguerra

IF IT IS TRUE THAT Jose Pepito Cayetano is out to spoil someone's candidacy, he appears to be succeeding.

Genuine Opposition candidate Alan Peter Cayetano yesterday admitted that the entry of this mysterious namesake in the Senate race was affecting his candidacy.

Cayetano, who is seeking to disqualify the other Cayetano, said he has been spending half his time during the campaign dealing with the disqualification case he filed before the Commission on Elections.

Not to mention the time he spends dealing with a separate disqualification case filed against him by former Pateros Mayor Jose Capco for allegedly being a United States citizen.

Even if the Comelec were to eventually decide to disqualify Jose Pepito, "he's already succeeded in messing up my campaign," Cayetano said.

Paper work

In the first 31 days of the 90-day campaign period, he said he was able to join less than 10 opposition sorties. Most of the time, he said he was in Manila saddled by paper work on the two disqualification cases.

On Monday, Cayetano will have to go to the Comelec office to file a response to the Capco petition. The hearing is set for the following Thursday.

He said the three-day period between the two appointments would not allow him any significant campaign activity.

In the very few times that he was able to join the GO campaign sorties, the Taguig congressman said explaining the difference between him and the other Cayetano usually took up much of his speaking time.

Cayetano is convinced that Jose Pepito was being fielded by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, through Kilusang Bagong Lipunan's Oliver Lozano, to spoil his senatorial bid. Jose Pepito, Lozano and Arroyo have all denied the allegation.

Cayetano earlier accused Arroyo of maintaining multi-million dollar accounts in Germany, an allegation that meted him a 45-day suspension by the House of Representatives' ethics committee.

Survey drop

He said the other Cayetano has been distributing campaign materials bearing the name "Peter Cayetano."

He said this served to confuse people, "which explains why I dropped in the recent Social Weather Stations Survey."

In the SWS survey released earlier this week, Cayetano ranked between 5th and 11th place, with 30.9 percent of 1,800 respondents choosing him.

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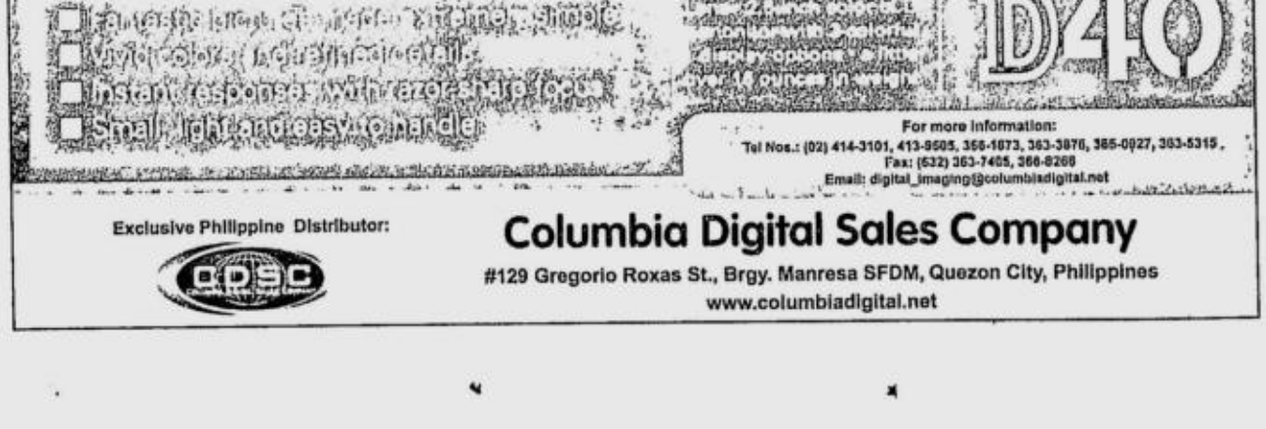

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DepED PS Form: PS-GOODS-05 Revised on: May 20, 2005 Project Reference No. _____

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Division of Misamis Oriental
A. Velez Street, Cagayan de Oro City
Telephone No. 856-4454 Fax No. 856-4524

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DepEd. Division of Misamis Oriental, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF SCHOOL FURNITURE 75% OF CY 2006 ALLOCATION
Location	DepEd, Division of Misamis Oriental
Brief Description	Item No. (1) 800 sets of Elementary Desks (consists of table and 2 Chairs) for Grades I - IV - all wood Item No. (2) 825 sets of Elementary Desks (consists of table and 2 Chairs) for Grace V - VI - all wood Item No. (3) 2,970 pcs. of Secondary Armchairs - all wood Item No. (4) 122 sets of Teacher's Table and Chair - all wood
ABC & Funding Source	Php 6,128,000.00 - CY 2006 GAA
Contract Duration	ONE HUNDRED TWENTY (120) CALENDAR DAYS

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

Activity	Date	Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 23-29, 2007	Division Office Building DepEd, Division of Mis. Or. A. Velez St., Cag. De Oro City
2. Pre-bid Conference	April 4, 2007 2:00 PM	Division Office Conference Room DepEd, Division of Mis. Or. A. Velez St., Cag. De Oro City
3. Deadline of Submission of Bids	April 17, 2007 10:00 AM	Mis. Or. Div. Office, Cag. De Oro City
4. Opening of Bids	April 17, 2007 10:00 AM	Mis. Or. Div. Office, Cag. De Oro City
5. Bid Evaluation	April 18-22, 2007	Mis. Or. Div. Office, Cag. De Oro City
6. Post-qualification	April 23-27, 2007	
7. Notice of Award	May 3, 2007	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of TWO THOUSAND (Php2,000.00) Pesos to the DepEd, Division of Misamis Oriental Cashier.

The BAC of the DepEd, Division of Misamis Oriental reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to the contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) LIBORIA P. TARE, BAC Member
(Sgd.) BERNADETTE P. SAMACO, BAC Member
(Sgd.) FLORA B. ESCALONA, BAC Member
(Sgd.) JOHNNY REDONDO, BAC Member
(Sgd.) NORBERTO E. ROSALES, TWG - BAC Chairman
Approved by:
(Sgd.) BERTILLA B. RAYOS, Ph.D., BAC Chairman

(PDI - March 17, 2007)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philippine Sugar Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (02) 454-0254 Website – www.nfa.gov.ph

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR YELLOW CORN ALLOCATION

The Economic Managers and the NFA Council has approved the importation of 200,000 metric tons yellow corn under a tax expenditure subsidy scheme. All interested corn users who want to avail of the corn allocation should submit their Letter of Intent (LOI) within five (5) working days to the NFA and should be guided by the following:

1. The quality specification is yellow corn grains equivalent to US Grade No. 2 or better.
2. Arrival of the corn imports will be June and July 2007
3. A P0.50/kg service fee and another P0.50/kg Corn Development Fund (CDF) shall be charged by the NFA
4. The NFA selling price shall be based on the Cost and Freight (C & F) of the commodity. All incidental costs in the unloading of the cargo from the vessel shall be for the account of the end-users/buyers.
5. The 200,000 MT yellow corn shall be distributed by allocation to legitimate corn users registered with the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).
6. The percentage allocation per category shall be as follows:

Category	% Allocation
Hog Raisers	30%
Poultry Raisers	35%
Feedmillers	35%

7. All interested corn users shall submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) which shall include the following:
   a. Volume to be purchased
   b. Preferred disport
   c. Category of the applicant

   LOI must be supported by a BAI Certification issued by BAI-Animal Feeds Standard Division, Diliman, Quezon City as of December 31, 2006 and a copy of the Baord Resolution authorizing the individual to transact business for and in behalf of the Company/Corporation. All requests that do not contain the above requirements shall be rejected.
8. LOI shall be submitted to the Marketing Operations Department (DMO) NFA Central Office, 4th Floor Philippine Sugar Center Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City or to the nearest NFA branch office by the interested corn buyers. The LOI must be received by the NFA branch office within the stated period and indicate the date and time it was received. Copies of the LOIs from the province may be faxed by the NFA branch office to the Marketing Operations Department.
9. The maximum volume to be allocated to the corn user shall be based on their three (3) months corn consumption requirements as reflected in the BAI certification.
10. Corn users shall be given until the close of office hours of March 23, 2007 to submit their Letter of Intent (LOI).
11. A Commitment Fee equivalent to P1.50/kg of the total volume allocated shall be paid by the corn user within three (3) days from the issuance of the Notice of Allocation. Payment shall be in Cash, Manager's or Cashier's Check at NFA Central Office, Philippine Sugar Center Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.
12. Full payment of the corn allocated to the buyers plus the P0.50/kg service fee and the P0.50/kg Corn Development Fund (CDF) shall be undertaken within three (3) days upon issuance of the Notice of Payment. The Notice of Payment shall reflect the final selling price of NFA. If the country of origin of the corn is ASEAN/ASIAN, the Notice of Payment shall be issued upon NFA's receipt of the notice of completion of vessel loading. If the corn is from other sources other than ASEAN/ASIAN countries, the Notice of Payment shall be issued upon receipt of the shipping documents by the NFA.
13. The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all offers, to waive any defects or informalities found therein and accept only such offers which in its judgment are most reasonable and advantageous to the Government.
14. For further details you may secure a copy of the General Guidelines of the Importation and Disposition of Yellow Corn grains at the Marketing Operations Department, 4th Floor, Philippine Sugar Center Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City or you may call at Tel. Nos. 426-05-69; 454-12-14; 453-39-00 local 4223; 982-38-00 loc. 4223.

(Sgd.) JESSUP P. NAVARRO
Administration

(PDI – March 17, 2007)

Bishops may support platforms, not candidates

ENDORSING INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES, NO. But their platforms, maybe.

A ranking official of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said on Thursday that the leaders of the bishops' organization had a "freewheeling" discussion on the possibility of openly expressing support for platforms of governance espoused by candidates seeking elective posts in the May mid-term elections.

"Some bishops (discussed) the pros and cons of supporting particular platforms instead of just individual candidates and I think that was the sense of the bishops, that we should support programs of government that are in tune with Gospel values," CBCP vice president, Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, told reporters in an interview.

Ledesma said that the upcoming elections was discussed "in passing" during the CBCP's Permanent Council Meeting held last Thursday at the CBCP office in Intramuros.

The Permanent Council Meeting, participated in by CBCP officials, set the agenda for the plenary assembly to be held in June.

"We stop short at naming particular candidates because we feel that is really left to the competence of the Catholic laity and mature voters. It is not within the competence of the religious leaders to name candidates," Ledesma said.

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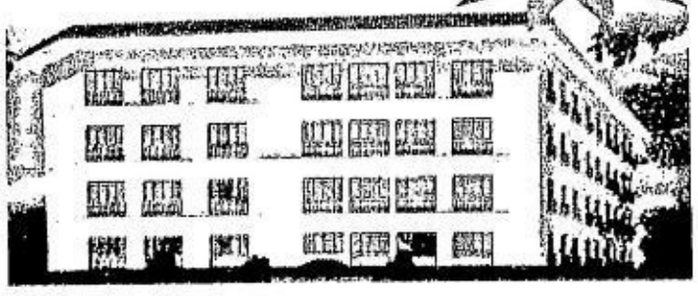

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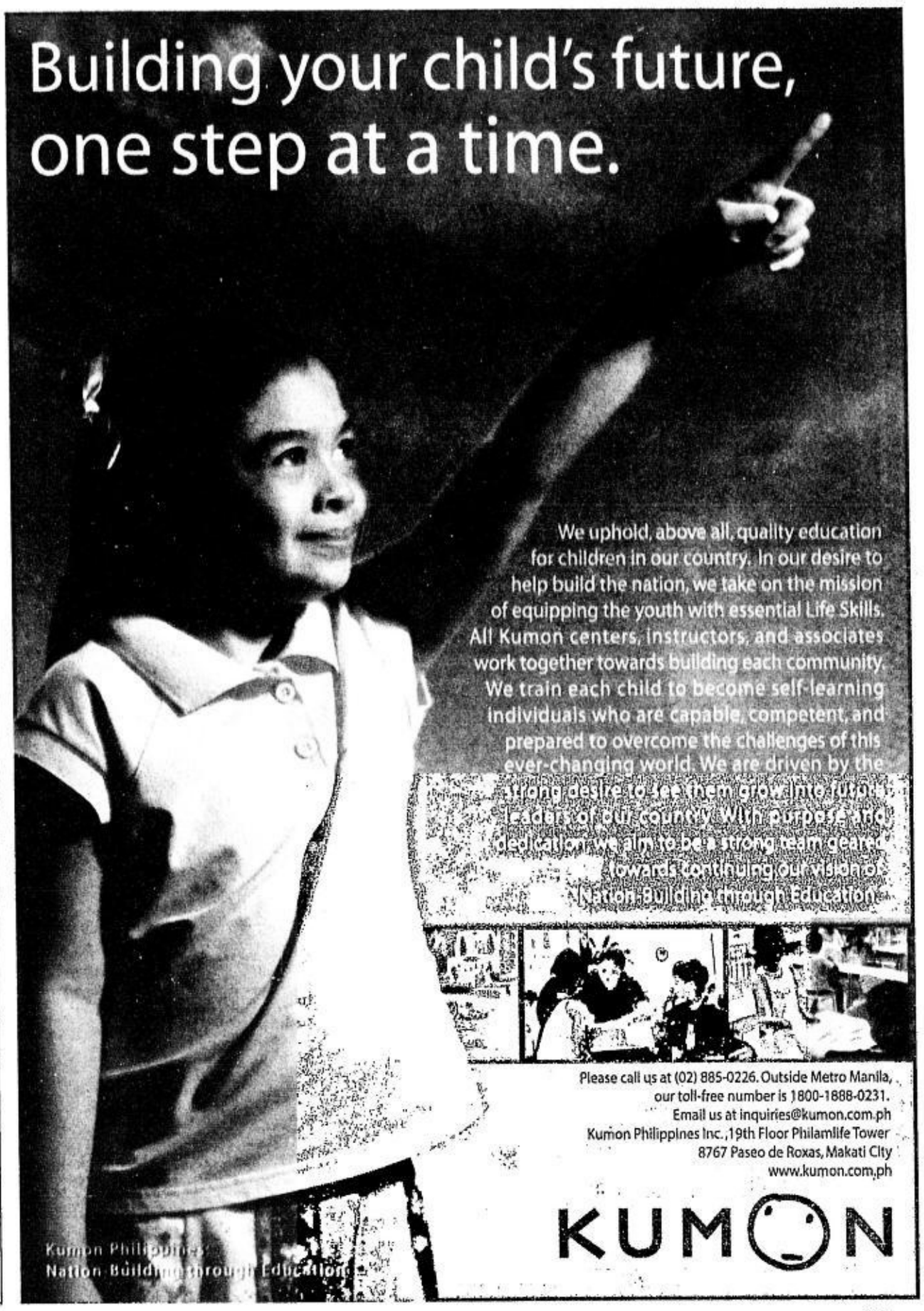

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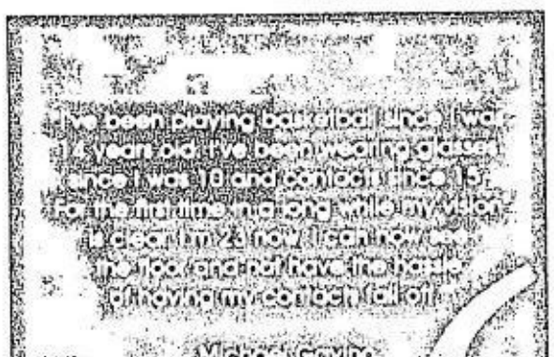

"I've been playing golf about three times a week for the past two years. I've been wearing glasses since I was a child and contact lenses for the past nine years, while my vision kept changing. I decided to have laser treatment because I was afraid that my eyesight would get worse. Fortunately, the procedure was painless and quick. I can now play golf without my glasses and contact lenses. Thank you very much."

- Michael Gayoso

"I would like to thank St. Luke's International Eye Center for the success of my laser eye treatment. After only six hours, I had perfect sight again. The treatment itself was very quick, no pain and very little discomfort."

- Paul Leighton

"I've been planning to have laser treatment ever since I learned about it. When an optha friend informed me about the new machine at St. Luke's and the promo they offered, I didn't have second thoughts and I'm glad I did grab the chance. Now, I've never felt better."

- Menela Galimpin

"I've been wearing eyeglasses and contact lens for 27 years. The procedure was quick and painless and my doctor took good care of me. The procedure was really worth it!"

- Wonne Salcedo

"After I've undergone the laser procedure, my vision improved beyond my expectations! Thank you very much."

- Rosalda B. Seguido

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*30 seconds is the average laser treatment time. US FDA study shows 93% corrected to 20/20 or better (Source: www.usaeyes.org).

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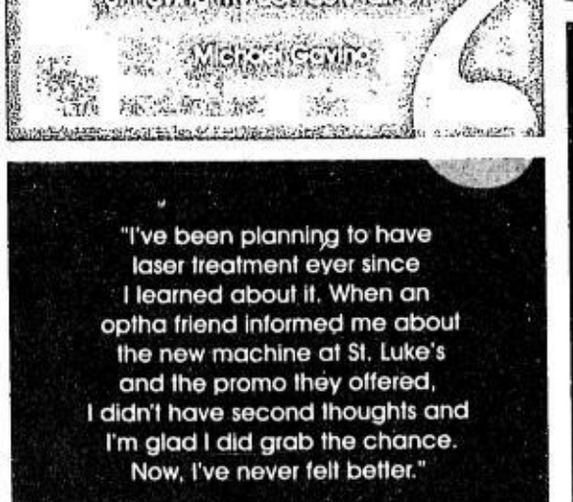
- Peggy See

"Given the extremely active lifestyle I lead and the demands of my profession, achieving a 20/20 vision again was a dream that turned into reality with the help of St. Luke's International Eye Institute."

- Roel Refran



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Inquiries regarding the said properties maybe made thru Tel. No. 436-1749 during waking hours except Sat. and Sun.

(Sgd.) LILIA D. SEVILLA

(PDI – March 10, 2007)

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INSTITUTE OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION
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MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE) COMPLIANCE PROGRAM
ONE-WEEK COURSE
26-30 March 2007
VENUE: SEAMEO-INNOTECH, COMMONWEALTH AVENUE, DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY

DATE	TOPIC	SUBJECT	CREDIT UNITS	LECTURER
26 March Monday	Judicial Review of Arbitration Awards	ADR	9:00-12:15 p.m. three (3) units	Prof. Alfredo F. Tadiar
	Effects of the New Guidelines on Pre-trial & Discovery in Criminal Cases	Pre-trial & Trial Skills	1:00-5:15 p.m. four (4) units	Prof. Theodore O. Te
27 March Tuesday	Law & Technology: Rules on Electronic Evidence	Substantive/ Procedural Law	9:00-12:15 p.m. three (3) units	Atty. Ivan John E. Uy
	Environmental Torts	MCLE Prescribed Subject	1:00-4:00 p.m. three (3) units	Atty. Ma. Paz G. Luna
	Pre-Proclamation Controversies and Election Contests	Substantive/ Procedural Law	4:15-7:15 p.m. three (3) units	Dean Salvador T. Carlota
28 March Wednesday	International Migrant Workers' Laws	International Law	9:00-11:15 a.m. two (2) units	Dean Merlin M. Magallona
	Modern Tools in Legal Research & Effective Legal Writing	Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy	1:00-5:15 p.m. four (4) units	Prof. Myrna S. Feliciano
29 March Thursday	Emerging Issues on Intellectual Property Rights	MCLE Prescribed Subject	9:00-12:15 p.m. three (3) units	Prof. Marvic MVF. Leonen
	Abuse & Misuse of Legal Remedies	Legal Ethics	1:00-4:15 p.m. three (3) units	Dean Ed Vincent S. Albano
30 March Friday	Media and the Legal Profession	Legal Ethics	9:00-12:15 p.m. three (3) units	Prof. Rowena E.V. Daroy Morales
	The Protection of Constitutional Rights and the Remedies for Their Violations	Substantive/ Procedural Law	1:00-4:00 p.m. three (3) units	Justice Vicente V. Mendoza
	ADR Act of 2004	ADR	4:15-6:15 p.m. two (2) units	Prof. Alfredo F. Tadiar

- REGISTRATION FEE: P7,000.00/package or P750.00/session [morning session or afternoon session]
- Fee is inclusive of snacks, LUNCH, MCLE Certificates of Attendance and lecture materials
- Schedules/lecturers/topics are subject to change without prior notice
- PLEASE REGISTER AT THE U.P. LAW CENTER (ACCOUNTING OFFICE) ON OR BEFORE 22 MARCH 2007

FVR's new goal: To be a hundred

By DJ Yap

TURNING A YEAR SHY OF 80—A PERSONAL milestone as far as he is concerned—former President Fidel V. Ramos said he has at least one more goal: To become a centenarian.

"That's my ambition, to reach the age of 100," he said on Thursday night during his 79th birthday party at the RCBC Plaza in Makati City.

And Ramos, whose birthday is actually tomorrow, March 18, is upbeat about his chances of reaching the centennial mark.

An old boss had told him the secret of living to 100, he told a crowd of friends, colleagues and well wishers at the bash, which coincided with the launch of his new book, a compilation of his Sunday columns for another broadsheet.

"I saw my former boss, retired Navy Commodore Jose Francisco, hitting golf balls in the Manila Golf Club six months ago. He called to me, hey, *bata* (young one), come here," Ramos related.

"And I said, boss, it's good to see you here hitting the ball up to now. Then he told me, *bata*, you know how old I am? I am 99 years and seven months. And I'm about to reach age 100."

"So I exclaimed, in deference to my boss who was looking very well. I said boss, that's also my ambition, to reach age 100," he said.

"Then he said, *bata*, come here, I'll tell you the secret. And he said it's very simple: Be sure you reach age 99, so you reach 100."

As though to ensure everybody got the punchline, Ramos asked his laughing audience: "You got it? You got it, all of you?"

Among those present were his wife Amelita "Ming" Ramos, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, House Speaker Jose de Venecia, and police chief Hermogenes Esperon.

The former president said he does not feel any older now that he has reached 79. "Life begins at 40. At 80, you are born again," he said, half in jest.

But he added there were some personal sacrifices that a man of 80 has to bear: "At 80, you start behaving according to the instructions of your wife."

"Since I'm turning 79, I consider it to be my last year of freedom," he said, eliciting more laughs.

"I am now a private citizen. My title is simply 'Mister.' But I enjoy the title because that is really the highest ranking title in the Philippines."

"It's the Mr. and Mrs. who are the voters who elect the highest officials in this beloved country of ours," he said, sounding not unlike his old political persona.

"But some have said, 'Mr.' is too simple or too common for you. Why don't you use another title. So, okay, you want to call me something else, you can call me, Ex-Prez-Phils. Meaning, Philippine Express," he said amid cheers.

"Go, go, go, *kaya pa natin ito* (We can still do this) … Let's shout so hard so we can be heard in Malacañang … Let's shake down this building by the strength of our collective roar. *Kaya ba natin ito* (Can we do this)?" he asked.

"*Kaya*! (We can)," was the crowd's loud reply.

3 Pinays leaving for Everest attempt

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE THREE FEMALE mountaineers hoping to become the first Southeast Asian women to reach the summit of Mt. Everest are scheduled to leave for Nepal on Sunday morning.

They will fly to Bangkok where they will stay overnight and then fly to Kathmandu, Nepal the following day.

Seawoman First Carina Dayondon, 28, said the team had been training during the last three years. "We want to show the country and the world what Pinays can achieve, not only with our strength but also with our teamwork," she told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Dayondon and fellow Philippine Coastguard members Noelle Wenceslao, 27, and Janet Belarmino, 28, will attempt to reach the highest peak in the world, hopefully in the second week of May. They will be guided by two Filipinos—Leo Oracion and Pastor Emata—who scaled the same mountain about the same time last year.

PCG doctor Ted Esguerra, who joined the team last year, will also be with them this year.

Dayondon said prayers and moral support from their families had been helping them focus on their goal.

"If we reach the summit, it will not just be because of our physical strength, but also because of our teamwork, our faith in God, our years of preparation and because of the support of our sponsors," she said.

Dayondon joined a mountaineers' group back in college when she was just 17. Coming from a simple family, she said she never thought it would be possible for her to one day scale Mt. Everest.

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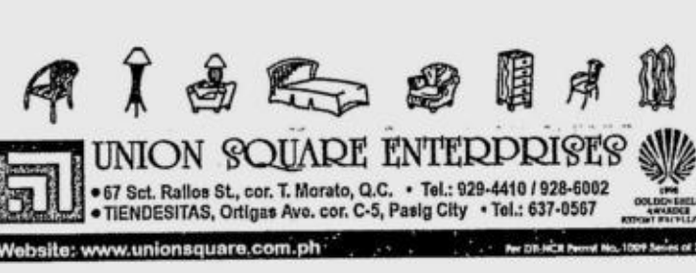

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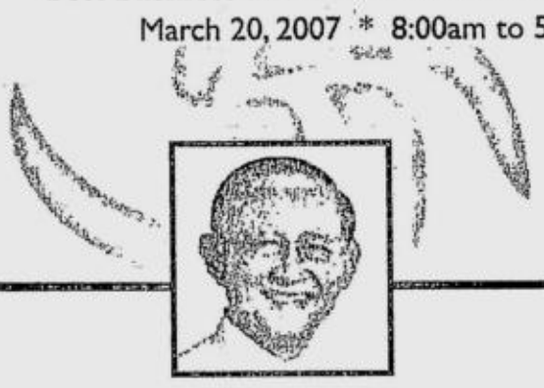

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(Department of Health)
and
Dr. Jean Marc Olivé (WHO)
Prof. David Molyneux *(Global Alliance to Eliminate LF)*

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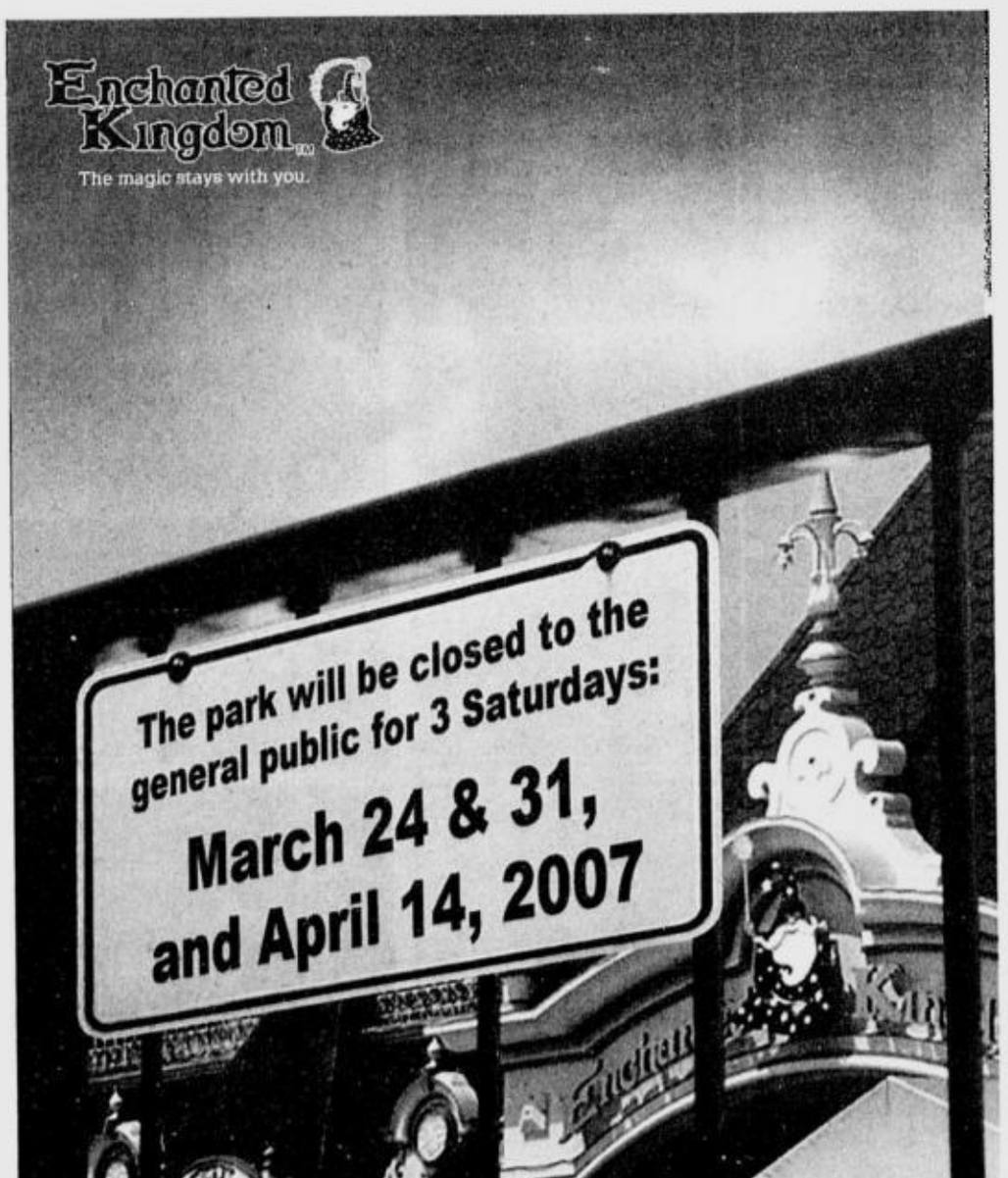
** Please use extra sheet for additional participants or call th e "CHANGING LIVES" Secretariat.



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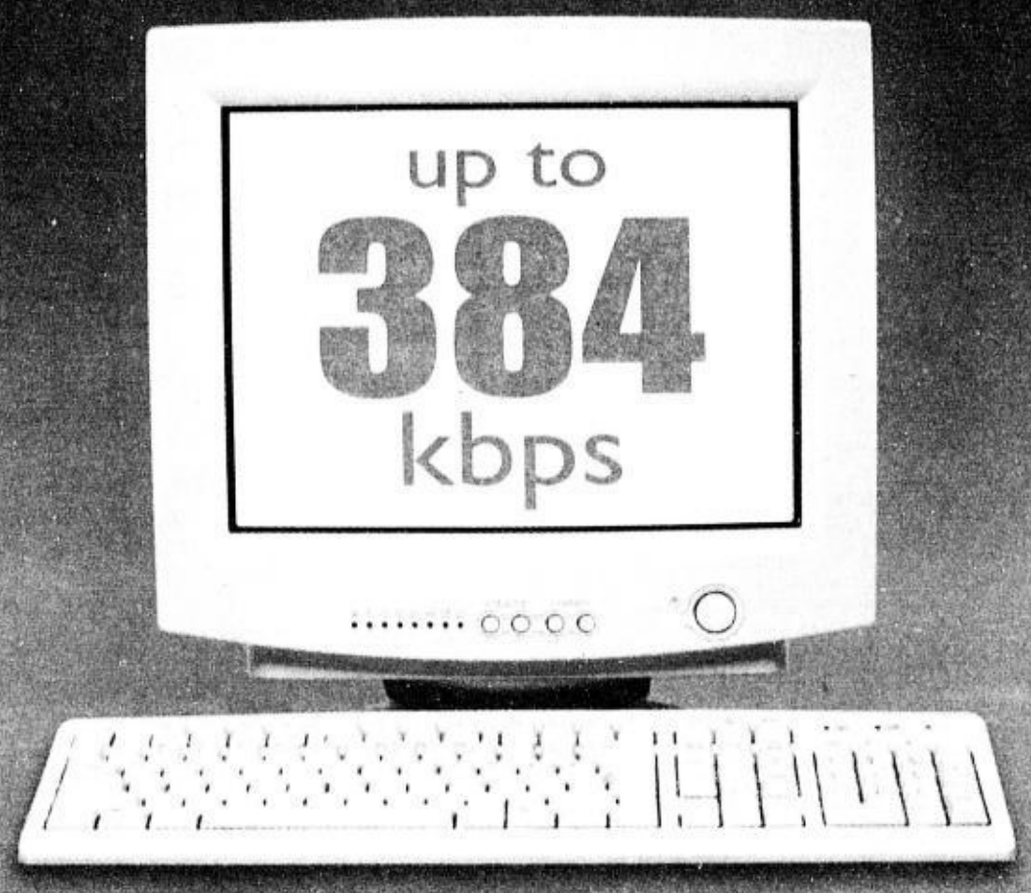

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GUIMARAS SPILL

Ship starts siphoning of oil from sunken tanker

SEVEN MONTHS AFTER A SUNKEN TANKER caused a major oil spill in the Philippines, a ship has begun siphoning the remaining fuel from the wreckage 640 meters (2,000 feet) under water, officials said yesterday.

The tanker spilled some of its cargo of 2 million liters of industrial fuel oil off the island of Guimaras, damaging marine reserves and affecting about 26,000 people who depend on fishing.

Desperate attempts were made to contain the oil in the province, known for beach resorts and a pristine marine environment.

Weeks after the Aug. 11 sinking, authorities collected cast-off clippings of human hair from salon owners and volunteers, then put it in permeable sacks and used them as improvised booms to mop up the oil.

The oil recovery ship Allied Shield, which arrived in the area last week, began collecting the remaining fuel, an operation that will take about 20 days and cost $6 million, shouldered by the insurer of the sunken Solar I.

Petron Corp., the Philippines' largest oil refiner, was found partly responsible for the disaster. A special investigation board has said the tanker was overloaded and the skipper incompetent.

"The retrieval of oil from the Solar I will finally end all speculation whether there is still oil on the vessel, and more importantly, ease the apprehensions of the people from the Visayas (region)," Petron chair Nicasio Alcantara said in a full-page ad in major newspapers.

Since the disaster, the company has embarked on a major public-relations exercise while paying for the cleanup.

"We made a commitment to Guimaras to do whatever it takes to restore it to normalcy," Alcantara said.

The oil recovery is run by Sonsub, an Italian company specializing in deep-water operations.

Sonsub says it successfully retrieved 13,500 tons of crude from the tanker Prestige when it sank off Spain in 2002.

Project director Robin Galleti said the extraction involves two remotely operated vehicles—remote-controlled undersea devices that will drill holes in the tanker's cargo tanks and insert a pipe. A tank will be then be lowered to capture the oil.

Underwater cameras will monitor the process while the recovery ship uses a global positioning system to remain directly above the tanker, Galleti said. *AP*

Film director Joey Gosiengfiao; 66

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

VETERAN FILM DIRECTOR JOEY GOSIENGfiao died yesterday of a heart attack, a day after his 66th birthday, according to friends.

He was rushed to the Quirino Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City on Thursday due to a heart attack, his sixth, but died a few hours later.

"He was extremely happy before he died," internationally acclaimed filmmaker Lav Diaz, who was in Bicol shooting a documentary, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He was in high spirits because he was busy with work, said Diaz. "Apart from the Cinema One retrospective, he even started renovating his house last Saturday and he was also organizing an all-girl band with (fellow filmmaker) Maryo J. (de los Reyes)," Diaz recounted.

He was cremated yesterday at Loyola Marikina following a memorial service organized by his friends.

Gosiengfiao is survived by two brothers, US-based historian Victor and Ateneo registrar Manuel.

Gosiengfiao was best known for the sexy, campy box-office hits he directed for Regal Films in the 1970s and 1980s: "Temptation Island," "Underage," "Bomba Star," "Katorse," "14 Going Steady," among others.

His films launched the likes of Dina Bonnevie, Snooky Serna, Maricel Soriano and Gretchen Barretto to full stardom.

"He was a brilliant director," Regal producer Lily Monteverde told the INQUIRER.

Pilar T. Tuaño; 86

PILAR T. TUAÑO, retired public school teacher, of Ozamiz City and Quezon City, died yesterday. She was 86.

She is survived by sisters Ligaya Engracia, Purificacion and Liwayway, brothers Oscar and Jose, and sister-in-law Rosie. Five days earlier, on March 11, sister Julieta T. Valbuena passed away in New York City. Brother Abelardo died a few years ago.

Her body lies at the Arlington Memorial Chapels on Araneta Ave., in Quezon City. Interment will be held on Wednesday, March 21, at the Himlayang Pilipino in Quezon City.

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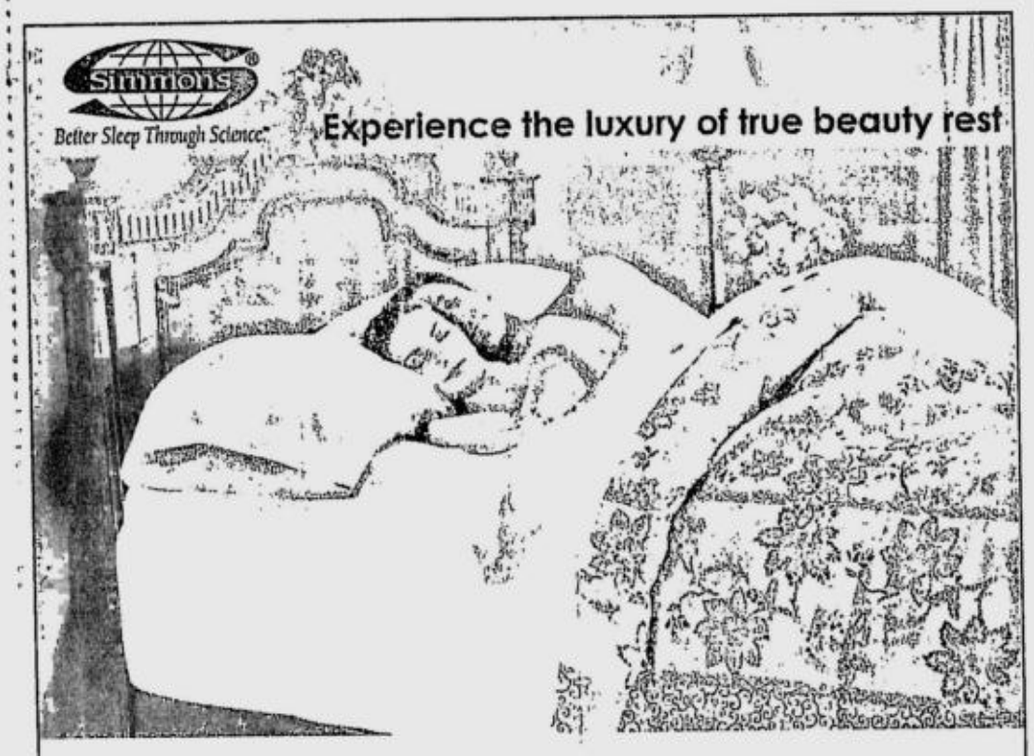

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Health - Center for Health Development for Ilocos, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Procurement of Insecticides to be used in the Campaign against Dengue and Malaria in the Ilocos Region
Location : Regionwide
Approved Budget for the contract : Php2,399,405.00

Item	Description	Quantity
1. D-Tetramethrin-Cyphenothrin	Liquid, for fogging, liter	250
2. Etofenprox WP	Sachet, for Malaria spraying, 50 gram	2,500
3. Alphacypermethrin WP	Sachet, for Malaria spraying 30 gram	1,000
4. Alphacypermethrin 1.5 SC	Liquid, for bed net treatment, liter	50

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Bid evaluation and post-qualification of the lowest calculated and responsive bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s); Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	April 2 - 13, 2007
2. Pre-bid Conference	April 2, 2007
3. Opening of Bids and Bid Evaluation	April 16, 2007
4. Post Qualification	April 19 - 20, 2007
5. Notice of Award	April 24, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of One Thousand Pesos (PhP1,000.00) to the CHD I Cashier.

The Center for Health Development for Ilocos assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

For further inquiries please call Mr. Gustavon S. Onias, Head BAC Secretariat at telephone Nos. 242-5315, 888-3395.

Approved:
(Sgd.) JIMUEL S. CARDENAS, MD., MHA.,
BAC Chairman

(PDI--March 10 & 17, 2007)

PSALM Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("*PSALM*") Privatization, Bids and Award Committee ("*The Committee*") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the second round of bidding for the privatization of the,

600 MW Masinloc Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant located at Masinloc, Zambales

(the "Asset"). The Asset is being privatized on an "as is where is" basis and will include a power supply allocation.

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest ("*LOI*") to the PSALM Privatization Bids and Awards Committee (the "*Committee*") which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. All LOIs must be received by the Committee at the PSALM Office with address at 4th Floor Bankmer Building, 6756 Ayala Avenue, Makati City not later than 5:00 p.m. on 12 April 2007, (the "*LOI Submission Deadline*"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, both in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S.$2,000.00) (the "*Participation Fee*"). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking, and Participation Fee must be received by the Committee on or before 5:00 p.m. on 13 April 2007 to entitle an interested party any further participation in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Package which includes the bidding procedures shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 29 March 2007 until 30 April 2007 (the "*Deadline*") at the PSALM Office. In accordance with the bidding procedures, only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package by the Deadline or a consortium which includes an interested party will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence : 29 March – 19 July 2007
Pre-bid Conference : 8 May 2007, 2:00 PM at the PSALM Office
Bid Submission Deadline : 26 July 2007, 12:00 noon at the PSALM Office

References to the dates and times shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to nine million U. S. Dollars (U.S.$ 9,000,000.00) in the form of an irrevocable standby letter of credit which must be acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guaranty prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction. The details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Award Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 892-6123 or (632)848-0263, fax number (632) 840-3896 or e-mail address **fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.**

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) **RAPHAEL P. M. LOTILLA**
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – March 15, 16 and 17, 2007)

Manila Water

NOTICE TO MANILA WATER CUSTOMERS

The continuing strength of the peso versus other currencies and the proper management of borrowings by the Company have resulted in a **reduction** in the Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA) by **16 centavos per cubic meter** from **-P0.12** per cubic meter to **-P0.28** per cubic meter, effective April 1, 2007. FCDA is based on exchange rate of P48.38 per US Dollar.

The reduction in FCDA was approved by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office in its Resolution No. 07-001-CA dated 14 March 2007 as confirmed by the MWSS Board Resolution No. 2007-062 dated 16 March 2007.

FCDA is a tariff mechanism that is adjusted upwards to recover losses if the peso depreciates and downwards if the peso appreciates against other currencies. Manila Water has to continue paying for the foreign exchange denominated concession fees to the MWSS, as well as loans required for its service expansion and improvement.

Manila Water Company continues to embark on an aggressive service expansion program to reach the fringe areas of Taguig, Antipolo, San Mateo, Rodriguez, Cainta, Taytay and Angono, in Rizal Province. Water supply projects have already commenced in the towns of Baras, Binangonan and Jalajala, also in Rizal. Further service improvement and rehabilitation programs are also being undertaken in areas with 100% water coverage which include the southeastern part of Quezon City, Mandaluyong City, San Juan, Marikina City, Pasig City, Pateros, Manila (San Andres and Sta. Ana only) and Makati City (east of South Super Highway).

Likewise, as part of the Company's mandate, Manila Water is expanding its wastewater operations and sanitation services all over the East Concession area to ensure the protection of the environment.

Esperon wants CPP outlawed, says NPAs in Metro

From page A1

operations not only against the CPP-NPA but also against the Abu Sayyaf bandits and other terrorist groups in order to establish a secure environment for national development.

Esperon said that he favored the outlawing of the CPP.

"If I had my way, I would really go for the declaration of outlawing the CPP as they are now," he said.

Esperon recalled that the Aquino administration in 1986 freed political detainees, like CPP founding chair Jose Maria Sison, so that they could have a "democratic space" but that Sison did not want to work in such an environment.

Esperon expressed doubt that Ms Arroyo would ask for his recommendation on this matter, saying she consulted other advisers who were "legal luminaries."

Antiterror law

"But with the Human Security Act, we can work (with) that for the meantime," he said. This means the government has to work "within the parameters of the law."

"If I had my way, I would want to arrest all these suspects, but no, we have to file the appropriate cases, we need warrants of arrest," he said in mixed English and Filipino.

NPAs are in Metro Manila

Esperon also said the deployment of troops in some barangays in Metro Manila was "in a sense" a counterinsurgency measure because it involves the training of new officers and soldiers in civil military actions, which are part of the antiinsurgency campaign.

"If, during those training, we are able to solve some problems in those areas, then we are hitting at the causes of insurgency—poverty for one," Esperon said.

"The urban and rural areas cannot be separated from each other. The NPA works in both urban and rural areas," he said.

Asked if the NPA had now infiltrated Metro Manila, Esperon shot back: "What do you think? *Meron, meron* (Some of them are here)."

"We already have some data on some students who went underground and joined the combatants," he said.

Vulnerable to recruitment

Esperon refused to give a direct answer when asked if the Metro barangays where the soldiers had been deployed were NPA-infiltrated areas, saying only that some of them were depressed barangays where poverty was a problem.

Residents in these depressed barangays become "vulnerable" to NPA recruitment or "they could be swayed into actions that otherwise they would not take if they were well off," he said.

Esperon said left-leaning organizations, while legal, were being supported by organizations "that are largely underground and these are of course in tandem with the armed group of the CPP-NPA-NDF."

Esperon claims success

"What I'm saying is that they have a common aim. They are moving towards only one objective, which is the overthrow of this government and impose a communist government."

Claiming the government was winning the war against the CPP-NPA, Esperon said that the administration was able to cut down the strength of the NPA from 11,930 men in 2001 to 7,160 this year.

He said that now, the NPA presence was felt in only five percent of the country's 42,000 barangays.

"We believe that at the rate we're going we would reduce them by about 1,000 every year, which means from now to 2010 ... we would cut the 7,000 (NPA strength) by half, which is 3,500," he told his audience.

At a strength of 3,500, the NPA "could no longer launch any major tactical operations," he said.

"We have the upperhand but much needs to be done to decisively defeat these groups. The passage of the ... antiterrorism law would greatly complement our efforts in countering these groups." *With PDI Research*

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
SOGY NAWANSHAR TRADING CORP. 1503 B. Galvani St., San Isidro, Makati City	Jagpal Singh	General Manager
NOVO NORDISK PHARMACEUTICAL (PHILIPPINES) INC. Unit 2006 One San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Vikrant Shrotriya	General Manager
GENPACT SERVICES LLC Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Arun Juyal	Senior Manager
ARINSO INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES, INC. Unit C, 6/F Cyber One Bldg., Eastwood Ave., Eastwood City Libis, Quezon City	Joeri J. Timp	Human Resource Outsourcing (HRO) Manager
NISSIN TRANSPORT PHILIPPINES CORP. 14 Cargo Village Complex, N. Aquino Ave., San Antonio, Parañaque City	Koji Maeda	Deputy Sales Representative for Japanese
LEE WOO AND KIM WOOK INC. 1005 Island Palm Tower Condo., #34 N. Domingo, Valencia, Quezon City	Bongwoo Lee	General Manager
HANSOO TOURS CORP. M8 Casa Catalina Bldg., 635 Gen. Malvar St. Malate, Manila	Kyungdeg Park (w/o Choo)	Administrative Manager
TSM SALES INC. Unit 25A, Eisenhower Condominium, #7 Eisenhower St., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila	Don Raymond Seale	Consultant
NEW BIWON CORPORATION 2822 P. Celle St. cor. EDSA Extn., Pasay City	Gibyung Lee	Assistant General Manager
CHON SOK ENTERPRISE CORP. UG2 Makati Palace Condo., P. Burgos St., Poblacion, Makati City	Seong Gu Hwang	General Manager
LEE WOO AND KIM WOOK INC. 1005 Island Palm Tower Condo., # 34 N. Domingo, Valencia, Quezon City	Sangwook Kim	Operation Manager
ZTE CORPORATION 25/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Shuo Ni	Technical Manager
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If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

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(PDI March 17, 2007)

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Joker yearns for good old days of campaigning

From page A1

when labor intensive industries, employing billboard artists and poster makers, had a field day.

With television as the preferred campaign method of today's candidates, very little of the vaunted election money goes to the pockets of the masses who look forward to this once-in-three-years-event for freebies.

"I'm really not happy with the way candidates use their money in the campaign. Just imagine how many Filipinos would have been happy with the giveaway T-shirts and caps if the candidates had spent less on television ads?" said the 80-year-old Arroyo in an interview with the INQUIRER.

'Useless spending'

He described the heavy flow of money into political media advertisements as "useless spending."

"Why spend all that kind of money? How far that money will go I don't know," he observed.

Arroyo said this was why he was against the Commission on Elections tightening its rules on the distribution of campaign paraphernalia such as T-shirts, pens, lighters and fans.

ARROYO: No T-shirts, pens...

"People look forward to this stuff as part of the elections. Why focus on this instead of the more important concern such as upholding the integrity of the elections?" he said.

Arroyo stressed that he had no problem with candidates opting to spend their allotted campaign budget on TV spots—like his Team Unity senatorial bet Prospero Pichay who is forking out P16 million a week for prime time TV exposure.

According to studies and election results, TV has proven to be the most efficient in increasing awareness among 42 million voters.

Both senatorial bets Ralph Recto and Manuel Villar, who rounded up the top three TV ad spenders for the first two weeks of the campaign, swear by the efficacy of electronic media, particularly TV, in penetrating the most number of people in the least amount of time.

Most potent medium

Recto said he learned a lot during his first senatorial campaign in 2001 where he found TV to be the most potent medium. Villar said he looked up to the cost-efficient strategy of Genuine Opposition campaign manager Serge Osmeña who limited his campaign spending to radio and TV ads in his two campaigns.

However, Arroyo feared that this trend would only widen the gap between the political haves and have-nots, where candidates with money to burn for TV commercials would always have the decided advantage in any election for national office.

Not outspend batch '04

He said the disparity between the financial resources of candidates would be evident when the 90-day campaign season reaches midway, or after Holy Week when those with money muscle would start unloading heavily.

Despite the heady pace of spending by the senatorial candidates this year, Arroyo said he believes this year's batch of candidates would not outspend the batch of 2004, when Senators Mar Roxas and Jamby Madrigal "really poured it on."

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Narcopolitics

EDITORIAL

THE RECENT GRUMBLING OF ADMINISTRATION senatorial candidate Cesar Montano, who threatened to withdraw from the campaign if the hundreds of millions of promised campaign pesos didn't start materializing, brings a deserving campaign issue to the fore. Where are candidates getting the millions required to run, and how on earth can they claim love of country justifies their spending fortunes that aren't even theirs to spend, for jobs that pay poorly?

Rear Adm. Paul Zukunft of the US Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-West says at least some political groups may be getting their political funding from the drug trade. Tens of millions of dollars—hundreds of millions of pesos—are generated by the drug trade, he says, and accompanied by a "sophisticated money-laundering scheme." The drug trade thrives when it can create its wares in peace: in secret laboratories for manufacturing crystal meth (*shabu*) mainly in areas controlled by Moro rebels; or under the protection the New People's Army accords growers of marijuana in the Cordilleras.

The Americans are making noise about secret *shabu* laboratories and the marijuana protection racket because the drug trade ends up affecting them. They have also become a regional concern: the raw materials for *shabu* production come from China, are shipped through Taiwan in some cases, and end up fattening the bank accounts of Chinese triads. The growing and trading of marijuana affects Australia, Malaysia, Japan and Taiwan. The Philippines, too, apparently serves as a processing point for ketamine, smuggled in from India then sent out to Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan.

A long-time observer of our politics told a recent media gathering that the money that fuels political campaigns come from four sources: drug money, gambling money, quotas from the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and the Philippine National Police, in that order. The web of influence that ties foreign triads with local armed groups, which then traffics in human misery and creates huge amounts of cash that can be used to bribe officials and the military, is called "narcopolitics." There's the cautionary tale of Colombia, which is in a perpetual state of lawlessness because of the cocaine cartels; or Afghanistan, the world capital for poppy (and thus, opium) production. And like any drug problem, the signs of an increasing dependency on *narcopolitico* pesos may be obvious to the public, but our officials remain in denial of the creeping danger.

Our poorly patrolled coastlines, our corruptly managed customs office, our infinitely pliable revenue bureaucrats, our military and police who have their fair share of persons in authority growing fat from protection money, our politicians desperate for campaign funds, and thus, easily tempted to accommodate gambling and drug lords (often the same people)—all these point to a gigantic campaign issue but one which perhaps neither administration nor opposition has the moral ascendancy to harp on.

The setting up of secret drug laboratories in rebel-controlled areas of Mindanao is a sign that there have been some achievements in the fight against drug trafficking. US officials say the factories had to move because similar facilities in Metro Manila had been shut down. But while production has moved, distribution is still a thriving industry in the metropolis. The market is in the national capital, and where petty criminality is on the rise, a flourishing drug trade is never far behind.

Car theft syndicates, roving bands of snatchers who steal cell phones, wallets, bags and who commit holdups—these are the manifestations of a crumbling system of law and order which bows to narcopoliticos. They are the signs that if some things are better in our national economy, there remains a gigantic underside that affects not those at the top, who can afford bodyguards and SUVs with sirens and keep petty criminals and the small-time pushers at bay.

We need to see a demonstration of greater political will: law and order is the bedrock of economic development. But sadly, that may not be coming any time soon, for the same reason that official reactions to the killings of journalists and activists go no further than lip service: Too many are implicated for officials to do more than issue ritual noises of protest.

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readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph • Tel. No. 897-8808, Loc. 342

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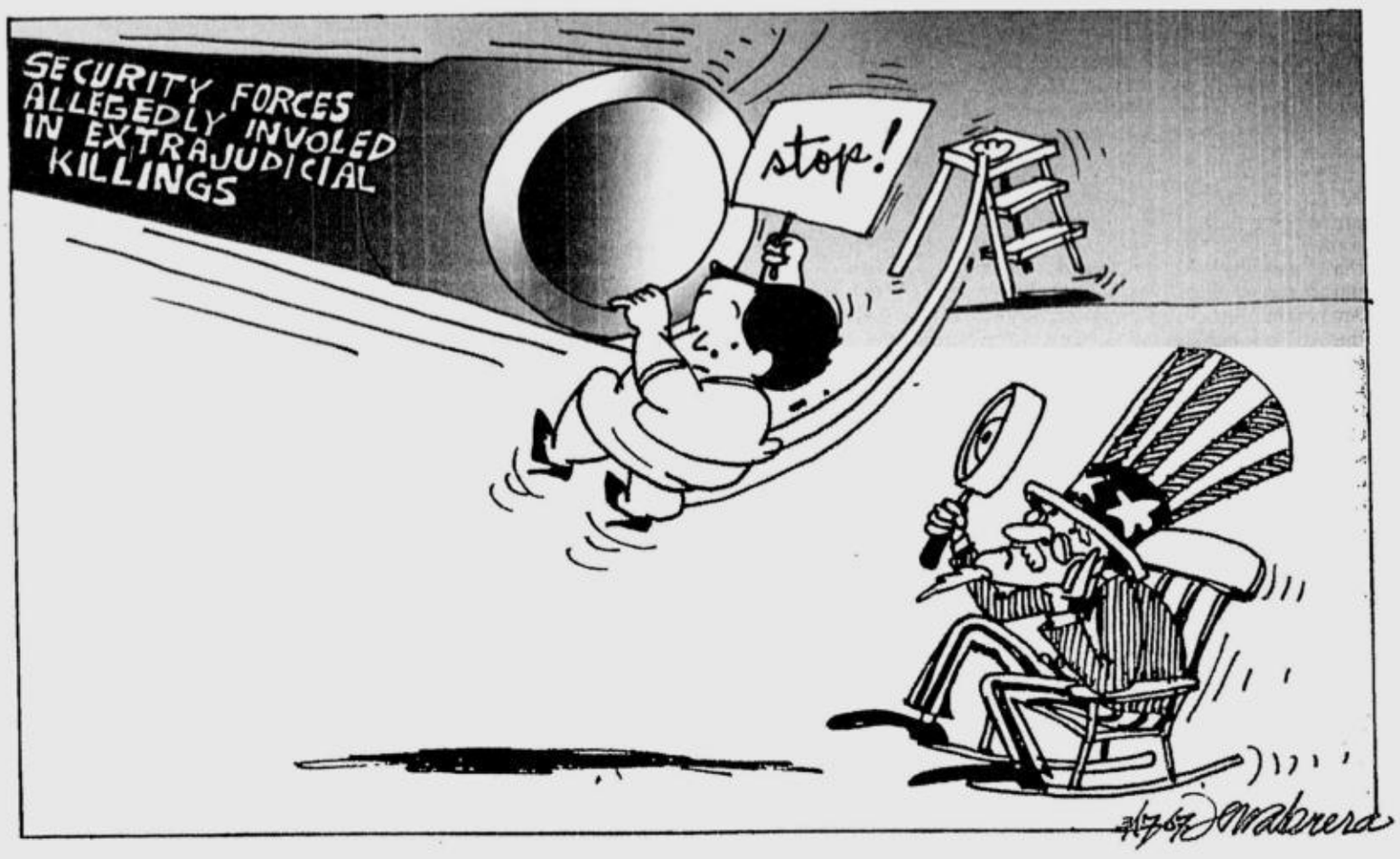


Term limits for public offices

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

EDWARD "TED" KENNEDY HAS COMPLETED 45 years in the US Senate and was recently elected for another six-year term. Sen. Robert Byrd preceded him by three years in 1959, but more impressive is the record of Sen. Strom Thurmond, who joined that chamber in 1953 and retired in 2001 at the age of 99. They and several other veterans in the US Congress are not inhibited by term limits like those prescribed in our Constitution. They can serve as long as they enjoy the confidence of their constituents and may retire at their own individual pleasure.

Our own elective officials from the President of the Philippines down to barangay council members do not enjoy similar freedom. That freedom, significantly, belongs not only to them but to their constituents who may want to retain them in office but are not allowed to do so by our Constitution. The incumbent official may be their best and only choice because of his competence and integrity, but they have to elect a less acceptable substitute who cannot compare with his retired predecessor.

The original term limits in our country applied only to the President of the Philippines who under the Commonwealth Constitution was allowed only one six-year term and by the 1940 amendment was permitted two four-year terms not exceeding eight years in all. Amendment XXII of the US Constitution adopted a similar limitation dictated by the exceptional record of President Franklin D. Roosevelt who was elected four times to his high office.

The amendment was probably motivated by the fear of an incipient dictatorship from a President overly popular with the people with enough official powers that may tempt him to perpetuate himself in office. But such apprehension would not apply to other elective officials whose powers are not as exclusive or as dominant as those of the Chief Executive. This is especially true in our centralized system where, as distinguished from the federal system, local political units are under the control of the national government.

Sergio Osmeña was elected and continued as Speaker of the Philippine Assembly and later the House of Representatives from 1907 until 1922. Manuel L. Quezon became and remained Senate president from 1917 until 1935 when he was elected President of the Commonwealth. The continued leadership of these two statesmen, maintained by the free will of the people as expressed in the ballot, was not interrupted by any legal prohibition.

Save in the case of the President of the Philippines whose unlimited retention of his office may be inimical to democratic governments as suggested above, I see no valid reason for limiting the number of terms other elective officials may enjoy by will of the voters themselves. If they are good officials as judged by their constituents, limitation of the number of terms they may continue to serve them would operate as a punishment instead of a reward for their satisfactory behavior.

The prohibition becomes all the more impractical if we consider how it is violated and in fact mocked by the current practice of some officials who will not take the foolish prohibition lying down. Their tongue-in-cheek solution to their problem is to simply arrange for one of their relatives—the spouse usually, one of the children, a parent if still alive or an available sibling—to replace them in the meantime and hold the fort for them, as it were, until they become qualified to run for the same office again.

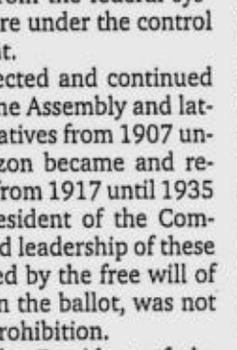
The subterfuge becomes all the more ridiculous because it is known to the constituents, who are only too willing to participate in the charade. It does not matter to them that the substitute is not as bright as the principal who, anyway, will still be controlling the conduct of the substituted office. The only hitch is that the understudy may begin to enjoy the privileges of the borrowed position and in the end refuse to surrender it to the real occupant. If the substitution is by the wife for the husband, or vice versa, the quarrel becomes not only official but also marital.

This development may provide the opportunity to a third party to present his own candidacy and end the reign of the political kingpin and his family dynasty. The challenger may be a dark horse to release the district from the clutches of the old regime. But all this will have to depend on the feelings of the voters themselves who may still be too attached to their accustomed leaders and be reluctant to replace them. Years and even decades of political patronage will make it difficult for newcomers to dislodge the established powerful machines and loosen their hold on the regimented voters.

The obvious and most efficacious remedy is the education of the electorate. The voters should be taught to exercise their suffrage wisely, without the influence of money, intimidation, gratitude, *pakikisama*, personal benefits and other irrelevant persuasions that will weaken the popular will to advance public interest over private advantage. The constitutional term limits are a futile palliative, and clever politicians have made them ludicrous too. These ineffective prohibitions should be reconsidered and removed when we rewrite the Constitution.

A case of incompetence or corruption?

GET REAL



Solita Collas-Monsod

WHY SHOULD A COMPANY, RUN BY A GOVernment-appointed management and board and which owes the government P36 billion (as of 2000), enter into a compromise agreement to settle an P11 billion (also as of 2000) disputed debt? And why should it agree to terms that will render it not only financially incapable of operating, but also incapable of paying its debt to the government? Doesn't that indicate, at best, gross incompetence, and at worst, corruption?

The company is the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC), which operates and maintains the North (until recently) and the South Luzon Tollways. The debt in question was incurred over 26 years ago, by a private mining corporation (Basey/CDCP Mining), guaranteed by its mother company (CDCP), which was taken over by the government and renamed PNCC.

The lender was Marubeni of Japan, which in 2001 sold its claims to a British Virgin Islands-based company, Radstock Securities (for $2 million). Radstock then pressed those claims—which if successful (i.e. the compromise agreement pushes through) will earn the company anywhere from P6 billion to P18 billion, depending on how one values the assets being transferred by the PNCC.

The original debt was $5 million (incurred in 1978 and roughly equivalent to P20 million at that time) plus another 5 billion yen (roughly P2 billion). With interest (at 10.5 percent a year) and penalties (14.5 percent), the debt has ballooned to P17.1 billion as of mid-2006.

Before the compromise agreement, there were disputes about that debt. The PNCC claimed that the debt had prescribed, because Marubeni had not pressed its claim after 1984 (the Civil Code sets a 10-year prescription period). The PNCC also claimed that the CDCP board did not give a guarantee for the loan to its mining subsidiary (Rodolfo M. Cuenca, head of the CDCP at that time, makes the same claim in a separate intervention with the Court of Appeals). It is noteworthy that the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) was very staunch in its defense of the PNCC's position.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the forum, as the saying goes, with tragic consequences for the rest of us.

First, almost literally out of the blue, the PNCC board passed a resolution in October 2000, acknowledging its obligation to Marubeni, which it valued at P10.7 billion. Why it did this was not answered satisfactorily during the Senate hearings last December, conducted by Sen. Franklin Drilon. The subsequent board, with Luis Sison as president, rescinded that resolution, but the damage was already done, because it dealt a major blow to the PNCC argument that the loan had prescribed.

Second, for once there was no "justice delayed" in the case. The collection case filed by Radstock against CDCP Mining Corp. (which I am informed is no longer in operation) was decided in less than two years (which in our system is like the speed of sound) with a whopping judgment of P13.1 billion against the PNCC, plus P10 million in attorney's fees.

Third, while the PNCC elevated the case to the Court of Appeals as well as to the Supreme Court for relief (the RTC judge issued a writ garnishing the PNCC's bank accounts and attaching several real properties), it seems to have suffered a change of heart—or a weakening of the spine.

Fourth, this change of heart may have been caused mainly by a similar change of heart on the part of the OGCC, whose then head, Agnes Devanadera, apparently opined that the government had only a 50-50 chance of winning the case (this, from Senator Drilon's replies to Sen. Edgardo Angara's inquiries in a Senate session). What the basis of this opinion was, is not explained.

Thus, the negotiations for a compromise agreement. What are the terms agreed upon?

Would you believe that the PNCC will give up to Radstock 50 percent of its toll collections net of taxes every year for 29 years, starting in 2007 up to 2035? The present value of this income stream is calculated to be only P1.3 billion, by the way. This low figure is arrived at by combining assumptions such as revenues growing at 5 percent a year, and a discount rate of interest of 15 percent (current borrowing rates are closer to 9 percent).

Would you believe that the PNCC will transfer to Radstock 19 pieces of real property appraised at almost P6 billion? But they don't use the appraised value. They use a "transfer" value, which is only 70 percent of the appraised value or P4.2 billion.

There is also the matter of the PNCC giving Radstock a 20 percent share in the "new" PNCC, given an appraised value of P2.3 billion, but an assigned value of P0.7 billion.

Even with all these downward-pulling assigned, transfer and present value calculations, the total still comes up to about P6.1 billion.

In all these, it does not look like the government-appointed PNCC officials or the OGCC gave a single thought about what the effect would be on the government claims which would be currently valued at P58 billion if we use the same interest rates used in calculating the current value. What would the effect be? Merely that the PNCC, with nothing left to operate with, would also have nothing left for the government.

And here's the kicker: If the RTC decided the Radstock case with the speed of sound, the Court of Appeals approved the compromise agreement with what could be considered twice the speed of light: two weeks.

Corruption? Incompetence? Take your pick.

US Senate chose to listen to leftists

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE HEARINGS IN THE US SENATE ON ALleged human rights violations and unexplained killings in the Philippines have chosen to listen only to the leftist personalities from here, and at this point, it's not clear how the AFP-PNP team dispatched by the administration to Washington would have a chance to air its views. The leftists have achieved their goal of securing the world stage for their accusation that the military is responsible for the killings and that the Arroyo administration should bear the command responsibility.

Recall that the leftists boycotted the Melo Commission hearings, encouraging it to declare that the military were behind the killings it had investigated. But when UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston arrived here for a 10-day investigation, the leftists formed a beeline to him. Alston similarly concluded that the military was responsible. Some foreign diplomats based in Manila, among them Italian Ambassador Rubens Fedele, however, have said they did not agree with Alston and that in their opinion the killings were done by various groups, including the military and the Left, for various reasons, including personal ones. The leftists' claim of over 800 victims is heavily disputed (the INQUIRER itself counts about 296). But discrepancies would doubtless not matter to the leftists, as they got the world stage and enough "progressive" American politicians riding on the issue.

* * *

Political pundits now offer reasons for why the US Senate chose to squeeze the Arroyo administration on this issue and make threats of military aid cut, instead of just issuing statements prodding it to action as the Europeans have done. Some see the geo-political reasons, such as retaliation for RP's arbitrary pullout from Iraq over Angelo de la Cruz. There's also the growing closeness of the Philippine government to China, America's rival for economic and soon military power. Whatever it is, the world seems to be coming full circle here, with leftist leaders enjoying the political hospitality of Uncle Sam, whose effigy they have burned a million times in front of the US Embassy; on the other hand, the "fascistic" regime of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is now snuggling closer to China, once the supreme patron of the local Left.

* * *

Last Thursday, former President Fidel V. Ramos launched his latest book, "Bulletin of FVR 'Sermons,'" a selection of his Manila Bulletin columns since May 8, 2005. I have always enjoyed FVR's columns as they cover various topics under the sun and are informative and well-researched, and one learns a lot from them. A sizable crowd of his friends, former Cabinet members and associates showed up because it was also a not so secret birthday celebration organized by his close friends (FVR turns 79 this Sunday). There was a lot of wine, with the celebrator, looking hale and hearty, joining lovely soprano Karla Patricia Gutierrez in belting out "My Way," while Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco displayed a mean boogie.

* * *

A guest at the party was former Bangko Sentral Governor Gabriel Singson who, over the years, I sought out at social gatherings for a chat on the monetary and financial situation. Singson is busy nowadays monitoring stock markets around the world which were shaken up by the New York stock exchange's fall, caused primarily by huge defaults in US housing loan payments. He noted that this time, RP stocks were down by 100 points and the slowest to recover in the region. But Singson said he's "very optimistic" about the economy, which is far stronger now than two years ago, as indicated by a much smaller deficit, a strong peso and the low inflation rate of 2 percent. He said the problem is that interest rates are even lower (1 ½ percent), so that people don't have much incentive to save. Our gross international reserves of $26 billion are at an all-time high, said Singson, due to the $1.099 billion in remittances from overseas Filipino workers and foreign portfolio investments (in stocks, money market and peso deposits, a.k.a. "hot money"), but this is still small compared to Thailand's $60 billion. He said things are really looking up for the Philippines.

* * *

President Arroyo has every reason to be all smiles these days, as the SWS surveys of Feb. 24-27, 2007, showed her obtaining "the best score since October 2004." And what it showed is that the optimism Singson feels about the economy is shared by the various classes, with the biggest satisfaction rating delivered by classes A, B and C, while those of D and E are inching up. What it means is that the people are beginning to appreciate what matters most to them—economic progress, stability, more jobs and what their incomes can buy—and not the bitter negativism and legitimacy issue that the opposition hammers upon continuously. Doubtless the various infrastructure projects being inaugurated by the administration in various regions have their impact, too, and all these are also bound to be reflected in the steady erosion of the opposition's 8-4 lead in the senatorial fight. To think the administration's formidable local machinery still has to start cranking.

* * *

The most influential social classes, A, B and C, registered the most dramatic change: a 21-point leap in satisfaction rating, from -14 percent in November 2006 to +7 percent. Class D showed 40 percent satisfied against 42 percent dissatisfied, or a net of -9 percent last November, while Class E had a net satisfaction rating of -8, compared with -25 percent last November. Metro Manila, a traditional opposition bailiwick, continued to oppose her, with her satisfaction rating dropping to -24 percent from -16 percent last November. But outside Metro Manila, GMA's net satisfaction rating turned "neutral" at -2 percent vs. -16 in November. The breakdown is +1 percent in the Visayas and 0 in Mindanao. What used to be a ho-hum campaign conceded to the opposition is becoming most interesting.

Yellow shirts in Bangkok

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BANGKOK—EVERYWHERE YOU GO IN THIS city, you'll glimpse men and women in yellow shirts, many of the shirts bearing embroidered patches of the King's insignia. My husband and I, trying out the underground MRT for the first time, at first thought the yellow-clad folks were MRT employees, and would have approached them for directions until we noticed that there were slight differences in style and even hue among the shirts.

Visiting the Chatuchak Weekend Market, we spotted even more yellow-clad citizens. We came upon a stall where people were hawking the yellow collared T-shirts. Wanting to join the trend, my husband attempted to buy some shirts as souvenirs but changed his mind when he found out how expensive they were, priced at more than a thousand baht.

We asked Thai friends what the shirts were all about and were told they had come into fashion here during the celebration last year of the King's 60th anniversary on the throne. Yellow being the symbolic color of the Royal Family, wearing yellow shirts became the ordinary Thai's way of paying homage to a beloved public figure. Civil servants and even employees of private companies were ordered to wear the shirts every Monday, and during the mass demonstrations against the Thaksin government, most of the demonstrators chose to wear the yellow shirts.

But wearing yellow in Thailand these days is not just a matter of seeking to ride on a fad, or even of showing one's support for the King. "For many, it's a matter of personal security," remarked a friend, for the shirts have become, it seems, a cipher for one's political affiliation. These days, wearing yellow could be seen as a way of declaring one's loyalty to government, which owes its origins to the Sept. 19, 2006 coup that overthrew the Thaksin government and billed itself "The Reform Committee in the Democratic System with the Monarchy as Head of State."

* * *

"ANYONE who has ever visited Thailand cannot fail to notice how this institution is celebrated everywhere," writes Giles Ji Ungphakorn in the book "A Coup for the Rich: Thailand's Political Crisis."

"Pictures of the King and Queen and other members of the Royal Family adorn many public buildings, along with the yellow and blue flags of the King and Queen," notes Ungphakorn. "Royal insignia are liberally used in such diverse settings as the electric sky train to private tower blocks. Bangkok has numerous royal monuments and there are many public holidays which celebrate this institution. The bookshops are full of books written by and written about the Royal Family, and recently, polo shirts with a picture of the King's favorite dog 'Tong-Daeng' sold like hot cakes."

Much of the monarchy's favorable image is undeniably attributable to the present King, now the longest-serving monarch in modern society. Ungphakorn acknowledges that "Today, it is widely accepted that the present King is a benevolent monarch who takes a keen interest in all spheres of public affairs. Public perception is that he is an accomplished engineer, agriculturist, photographer, musician, writer and statesman. We are taught that 'Without the King, whom we all love, Thailand would be a crisis-prone banana republic.'"

* * *

AND yet Ungphakorn, a professor at Chulalongkorn University, writes in his book that the fact is that the King "is a pillar of elite society."

In his book, which is being circulated off the commercial network, Ungphakorn notes that "as an institution, the monarchy often behaves like a business corporation, charging fees for public appearances and degree ceremonies... The legitimizing influence of the monarchy is sought by many people from very different backgrounds."

Recent Thai history, or at least as it is presented by foreign media, has been marked by strategic interventions by the King who has gained a global image of not just Thailand's main stabilizing force, but also as a "defender of democracy."

And yet Ungphakorn says much of this reputation is a matter of canny image-building and reinvention. "Today the main driving force for this constant development of 'image' is the Palace itself, often through the press. As the prestige of the institution has increased, it is no longer necessary to depend on the promotion of the monarchy by other political forces. If other political forces do promote the monarchy today, it is in the hope of gaining credit by attaching themselves to the monarchy."

* * *

AND yet the "democratic image" of the Royal Family is contradicted by what Ungphakorn sees as its support for conservative military regimes, including the leaders of the Sept. 19 coup.

"The stature of the present King has been achieved by a combination of different factors," writes Ungphakorn. "These include the deliberate promotion of the monarchy since the 1960s and the King's ability to act as an elder statesman, given the length of his reign. This makes the monarchy a potentially very influential institution, despite its lack of formal power."

Though other Royal Families in Europe enjoy prestige as symbols of continuity and tradition, in Thailand, "there has been a modern attempt to portray the monarchy as a magical and holy institution," remarks Ungphakorn. And yet, he says, "any institution that is not based on reality cannot survive for long." Calling for a more open examination and criticism of the monarchy (it is a crime for anyone to "insult" the King publicly), Ungphakorn declares that the monarchy "cannot carry on in the same way forever." This, he says, "should not be cause for anxiety and fear. It is a challenge and an opportunity for all Thai citizens to participate in reshaping Thai society and politics for the common good."

The extinction puzzle

WORLD VIEW

Stuart Pimm

WITH SIX BILLION HUMANS AND COUNTing—and our individual consumption growing—we face enormous challenges in using our natural resources in a sustainable manner. And there is one clear measure of how we perform at that task: extinction rates. For this reason, some colleagues and I have calculated the rate at which bird species became extinct in the recent past and the rate at which they will likely become extinct in the future.

Bird extinctions are our best window on to humanity's massive and irreversible environmental impact. For every one of the world's 10,000 bird species, there may be 10 or perhaps even 100 other unknown species of animals, plants or fungi. Birds' popularity means that they provide an unrivaled source of information about which species live where and how well those species are doing.

Estimates of the number of extinctions have tended to vary wildly, owing to differences in the assumed total number of species, which range from the one million species that have scientific names to an implausibly high estimate of 100 million species. To avoid such uncertainties, my colleagues and I introduced the extinction rate—the number of extinctions per year per species or, to make the numbers more reasonable, extinctions per million species-years—E/MSY. With the exception of the past five mass extinction events, estimates from the fossil record suggest that an approximate background rate is one extinction per million species-years, (1 E/MSY). For the 10,000 bird species, there should only be one extinction in each century.

Before European exploration, the Polynesian expansion across the Pacific probably exterminated species at the rate of one every year or two, which is 50 to 100 times more extinctions than should occur naturally. For example, parrots, rails and doves once occurred across the Pacific on sufficiently large islands. Those islands that have been well explored archaeologically yield bones of species the Polynesians exterminated, while the islands now lack them.

We can predict which islands were likely large enough to have once supported unique species and so estimate how many species are missing. The total is nearly 1,000. We have yet to do comparable analyses on the fate of Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands following first human contact, but it is likely that large numbers of extinctions occurred there, too.

Early European exploration likely continued this rapid pace of extinction. The number of species known to have expired between 1500 and 1800 is increasing as taxonomists describe new species from skeletal remains they find in caves, for example, where bones survive. These searches are far from complete.

Linneaus invented the modern process of naming species in the mid-1700s, although naming did not get under way until the peace following Napoleon Bonaparte's defeat in 1815. Whereas bird taxonomists had described only 2,000 bird species by 1815, in the next 50 years they described about 5,000 more. This means that most of what we know about birds and their extinctions date from the 1800s. To get an accurate picture of extinction, we must adjust the total number of extinctions for the length of time science has known bird species.

A second adjustment is necessary because conservationists follow the principle that a species survives even if it is not recently recorded in its native habitat. This assumption prevents terminating conservation efforts prematurely, even as it underestimates the total number of extinctions. We added species that are probably extinct, too. With these two adjustments, the extinction rate has been about 100 times higher than natural over the last two centuries.

Our predictions of 21st-century extinctions jump an order of magnitude to 1,000 E/MSY. Not only are 12 percent of bird species already in danger of extinction, but more than twice that proportion have small geographical ranges (the key predictor of threat) and most live in habitats that are seriously threatened. Tropical forests, for example, hold the majority of bird species—and likely most other kinds of species, too. If present trends of deforestation continue, we project bird extinction rates to climb to 1,500 E/MSY by the last decades of this century.

Moreover, our calculations are conservative, as they do not include extinctions caused by invasive species, the expansion of human technologies (such as the long-line fishing that harms many seabirds), or global warming. All would increase our estimates.

Likewise, birds are poor models for other kinds of species, because public concern over birds generally leads to rapid actions to save them. Indeed, we showed that aggressive conservation actions have reduced bird extinction rates over the last few decades to about 25 E/MSY—still very high, but down sharply from the 100 E/MSY projected were conservation actions not in place.

Certainly, some other species also benefit from the protections that we afford birds, but many other species do not. Moreover, human actions threaten substantially higher proportions of other well-known groups, such as flowering plants and amphibians.

Our results show that conservation efforts can reduce the irreversible loss of biodiversity. Nevertheless, future rates of extinction constitute a problem that will be very much harder to solve.

Project Syndicate

Stuart Pimm, a professor at Duke University and at the University of Pretoria's Conservation Ecology Research Unit, was awarded the 2006 Heineken Prize for Environmental Sciences by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

'Bibo kid'

YOUNG BLOOD

Leslie E. Vicente

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

AT SOME POINT, I THOUGHT I HAD LOST IT. BUT EVERY time my colleagues' enthusiasm captures my attention, I feel like the *bibo* kid from my past would like to make a comeback.

If your blood pressure rises because some two-legged creature keeps you from having an early lunch with endless questions during classes and seminars, you can hit me. If you are tired of seeing the same face in front of the class or on the podium, then you can hit me again. And if you were one of those applicants or neophyte teachers who felt strained by a rainfall of questions and arguments aimed mainly to heighten your anxiety, then you can hit me again and again.

I don't know how everything started or how things changed.

On my first day in school, I silently stood outside the classroom for over an hour despite my teacher's insistent invitation for me to come inside. Meek as a lamb, I stayed near the door, too afraid to enter the room filled with kids who must have gobbled a year's supply of energy. I don't know how I finally managed to move my feet and find a chair inside the room.

In the succeeding days, I rarely found the courage to talk to my seatmates. Playing with my peers seemed like a strange thing for me to do. During recitation, since my teachers always ask me to speak louder, I thought that was a normal occurrence.

I can very well recall the result of my first set of exams in pre-school. On a thick green paper, my teacher drew an award and asked the entire class to guess who among us got a perfect score. After shouting the names of almost all my classmates, nobody got the right answer. And when the prize was handed to me, many were surprised to know that I actually existed.

Eventually, evolution caught up with the very timid and soft-spoken school grader who always got the lowest rating for sociability. Gradually, I learned that speaking out was not bad at all since no one got persecuted for exercising one's vocal cords. I realized that I wouldn't be devoured alive if I participated in school activities, that I wouldn't melt down if I presented something in front of the class. Now, I can actually do a lot of things which I never thought I could do when I was still an anti-social mute.

It happened fast. One day, I just woke up to realize that I already belonged to the imaginary Bibo Kids' Club.

Whether I was able to deceive my classmates of my leadership ability or they were fond of making odd choices, I don't know. But in high school, I was consistently elected as class president. I joined various clubs and participated in various school programs and activities. I represented the school in numerous academic competitions: math, science, general information, and even journalism. For every poster and collage-making contest held several times in a year, I led our class in the conceptualization. For the endless plays required in our class, I wrote the script and directed. I also played chess in an inter-school sports fest, designed the batch T-shirt and coordinated the cheering competition during intramurals. When I was in third year, I held the second highest position in both the student council and the student publication. The following year, I edited the campus paper.

And yes, I did a Filipiniana dance number on stage during one of our school activities despite having two left feet. I tried hard not to look like a dancing retardate.

During those younger days, passivity and exhaustion departed from my vocabulary. The pleasure I got from speaking in front of a crowd continued to grow. In fact, while we were preparing for our graduation ceremonies in high school, I told some of the faculty members that I would gladly be their commencement speaker a number of years thence.

In college, I quickly found out that the members of the Bibo Kids' Society were so much more than I expected. Countless times, I opted to be silent. But there were more instances when I felt bothered and restless if I did not raise my hand and recite in class. And just like before, my ego hurt if I did not get the highest scores.

I must have bumped my head somewhere, but one day, I just learned there was such a thing as maturity. Even if I wanted to prove something to myself, my towering expectations were already causing me more discontent than fulfillment. I was like a child who never gets satisfied with her toy and continues to yearn for attention.

Slowly, my perspective widened. I devoted more of my time to things in which I found more meaning.

I became active in academic organizations that went beyond the classroom and practiced social responsibility. For three years, I committed a significant amount of my time and effort to the campus publication that served the entire studentry. I joined the liturgical committee of the university parish as a lector during Masses. I still aimed to graduate with Latin honors not only to reward my parents but also because I wanted to make sure I would not find myself jobless.

The road was not easy. I remember nights when I lay in bed in agony because of a severe headache. My eyes would well up in tears. I was probably pushing myself too hard. In those distressing hours, I would hold a small bottle of White Flower in my hand while thinking of what I had done the past years. Then I would think far into the future and consider possibilities. What if I died at that very moment? Have I already served my purpose? I was sure that I was not yet ready to go.

Soon I realized that I was running too fast. I was missing the scenery. I knew very well that I had to spend more time on the activities and with the people I valued most. I had to slow down and put the *bibo* kid in silent mode. Bibo kids are not born. Becoming one is a matter of choice.

Now after working in an auditing firm for nearly three years, I have come across hundreds of *bibo* kids—from clients to colleagues in the workplace. They remind me of a past that never fails to make me smile. The *bibo* kid in me must have died, but the dreams remain.

I dream of being able to leave an indelible mark, but this time it is not by achieving so much. The medals and trophies proudly displayed on the shelf will soon be covered with dust. They will tarnish. They will be forgotten. In the end, what will remain is that which has been instilled in the heart.

Leslie E. Vicente, 23, a certified public accountant, is a senior associate in an auditing firm in Makati.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Today Ocampo, tomorrow who?

THE ARREST WARRANT ISSUED against party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo for murders allegedly committed while he was in jail is so ridiculous. It raises a danger signal.

Today it is Satur; tomorrow, who's to know. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has thrown the rule of law out of the window. It is our duty to protest and resist the continuing attempts to curtail our freedoms. One wonders how many Filipinos of lesser stature have been subjected to this kind of totalitarian bullying.

We are citizens of a democratic country. As such, we cannot allow this fill-in-the-blanks form of law and order that only GMA and her cohorts are allowed to answer unchecked.

GMA's sole aim is to destroy and marginalize progressive party-list organizations running in the May elections. Stop the political harassment of Satur Ocampo. Stop GMA.

—RENATO CONSTANTINO JR.

'Echoed' concerns, tape-recorded warnings

IN THE INQUIRER'S MARCH 3 issue, I was the subject of a news item under the byline of Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes. She wrote of reactions by certain Pangasinan politicians to statements I allegedly made during a press conference.

For the record, I was only invited to that press conference, along with members of the media, by Vice Gov. Oscar Lambino. I was told that Fuertes was not present then and did not even interview those who were there. The statements she attributed to me were not mine but those of other guests, particularly Mayor Alfonso Soriano of Malasiqui, where my daughter resides. The statements may also be attributed to the host himself, Lambino. When I was interviewed then, I only echoed their concerns, believing that such crucial political matters, if left unattended, could deteriorate into serious trouble.

As a mother to Rachel who will be running for a seat in the third district of Pangasinan, and as a registered voter myself, I firmly believe that any threat to an honest, orderly and peaceful election must be addressed without delay.

Furthermore, the public must know that the crux of the issue does not rest in any personal interest of mine or in the candidacy of my daughter, Rachel, but in the brewing tension between incumbents, Gov. Victor Agbayani and Lambino. Lambino, being the provincial chair of Lakas-CMD, expects, under party rules, to be nominated by the party for governor, now that Agbayani is on his last term. Agbayani is said to be lobbying instead for his wife, Dr. Eloisa Agbayani.

As an active participant, ready to contribute to nation-building in whatever humble way I can as a philanthropist, a patron of the arts and culture, a modest media practitioner having at some point been a columnist and public affairs television host, I believe it is the duty of every Filipino, endowed with more of life's privileges, to use his empowerment to articulate the interests of the marginalized. In the interest of fairness, I hope it can be cleared on record that I have not made those statements; and by voicing them on behalf of others, I only acted as a responsible citizen.

—ROSE MARIE J. ARENAS

Ms Arenas apparently refers to an earlier story written by another correspondent who was at the press conference.

No, I was not at the press conference and, in my story, I did not say I was.

The basis of my March 3 report were the reactions (of the mayors I interviewed) to the earlier story. To make sure that she was quoted correctly by the INQUIRER, I listened to the tape-recorded interview of Ms Arenas. The exact word she said was "magkakamatayan" in the third district if Gov. Victor Agbayani put up other mayoral candidates. She also said: "Di kami papayag doon. Magkakagulo doon."

—YOLANDA SOTELO-FUERTES, correspondent, Inquirer Northern Luzon

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

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LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

GSIS systems already fixed

THIS IS IN CONNECTION WITH the delayed GSIS pension of Arturo Filoteo, which Ramon Tulfo mentioned in his March 3 column.

Upon verification, we learned that Filoteo had earlier made a request to have his servicing GSIS office transferred from the GSIS Cebu field office to the GSIS main office in Pasay City. His request was filed about the same time he enrolled for the eCard Plus. The transfer of his records and the simultaneous updating of these records to the eCard system caused the inadvertent delay of his pension.

As of this writing, all his back pensions—from November to March as well as his 2006 cash gift—have been credited to his eCard account. We have also made the necessary corrections in our systems to make sure incidents similar to this do not happen again.

We would like to assure the public and our clientele that the GSIS remains in good financial health, ready to provide for the benefits of our members and pensioners. We have always been transparent in the way we handle our finances, which we regularly submit for scrutiny by the Commission on Audit.

—VELLY N. LUCILO, manager, Pension Administration Dept., Government Service Insurance System, Financial Center, Roxas Boulevard, 1308 Pasay City

Prayerful call for those in their 80s

LIKE ZARA JANE JUAN IN HER letter titled "Prayer as a tool" (INQUIRER, 3/7/07), I urge all eighty-somethings like me to take her advice and start the day with a communion with the Lord, while everybody in the family is asleep and the house is still and quiet. Aside from a short prayer of thanksgiving for another day, we join others to pray for world peace and an end to war and violence.

For those like me who go to bed not later than 9 o'clock at night, and wake up refreshed with only five hours' sleep, the EWTN's "International Rosary for Peace" at 2:30 a.m., followed by the "Chaplet of Divine Mercy" at 3 o'clock are perfect day starters. Throw in the "Joy of Music" with Diane Bish at 3:30 a.m. and your day is made. There are wonderful programs that keep you awake in between until the 6 o'clock daily Mass replay beamed from Alabama.

If you are still amenable after your first cup of coffee, you can pray with Mother Angelica the Chaplet of St. Michael and the Holy Rosary. By this time, if you are still the house manager at your age as I am, you have already set the house help on their chores, sent off your grandchildren to school and settled down on your breakfast of oatmeal and fruit while reading the papers and doing the crossword.

If like me, you are still involved with other duties aside from grand-parenting, you sit down at your desk and prepare for the arrival of your secretary-girl Friday on ordinary days—this, maybe, to write letters, to follow up requests for action from your mayor or councilors or congressmen and, yes, even from senators regarding advocacies like regulation of giant billboards, appropriation for the care and intervention for special children in the barangay day-care centers, for the removal of obstructions to traffic in your area, for the improvement of the status of the trees at the Quezon Memorial Circle, for the abatement of the noise of tricycles without the required mufflers.

Yes, we can still make our country the best place in the world to live in. With our prayers, our faith and trust in the Almighty and our pen, even we the eightysomethings can do a lot to make positive things happen.

—CONSUELO D. SISON, 10 Alpha Rd., Alpha Village, Capitol Hills, Quezon City

Cynical about Velarde's suggestion

THE URGENT CALL OF EL SHADdai's charismatic leader Brother Mike Velarde for Catholic bishops to endorse 18 senatorial candidates (INQUIRER, 3/13/07) should be taken with a grain of salt, considering that this group has always attached itself to incumbent administrations regardless of who its leader is. When Joseph Estrada was still the president, El Shaddai supported him as it now supports Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

A true vote of conscience should be drawn from the people's political enlightenment and their awareness and knowledge of the issues. Basic questions should be asked like who are the senators (now running for reelection) who supported EVAT despite the people's opposition to it? These realities of political decisions are clearly far from the specious GMA-proclaimed "declarations of God" and "God-ordained will."

What can Brother Mike say about a President who can have direct conversations with God, yet cannot lead the nation to economic salvation? Well, one thing sure for now is we cannot just hope and pray.

—MARIA IRENE SANTOS, 4542-C Valenzuela St., Sta. Mesa, Manila

If GO loses, it has only itself to blame

IF THE "GENUINE" OPPOSITION IS MEETING sparse crowds, resulting in the cancellation of some of its rallies—as the administration claims—it has only itself to blame.

The present political opposition is a paper caricature of the opposition parties before martial law, which hurled fire and brimstone against the administration party led by the incumbent president, accusing it of all political crimes under the sun, including unbridled corruption, oppression, militarization, incompetence and betrayal of the public trust.

The opposition, whether it was the Liberal Party or the Nacionalista Party, or a Third Party, like the Progressive Party of Manahan and Manglapus, did not quail from attacking the incumbent president whoever he was. Thus, when the Liberal Party rally at Plaza Miranda was bombed during the 1971 mid-term election, people blamed President Marcos, who was the primary target of the opposition's fierce assaults.

It was probably his vulnerability and sensitivity to political attacks that made Marcos plan the murder of democracy via a martial law declaration in 1972. In 1978, when Marcos called for interim assembly elections, he was so badly pilloried by the opposition, led by Ninoy Aquino and Ernesto Maceda, that he never called an election until 1984 when he was forced to do so to quell the unrest following the 1983 assassination of Aquino.

When the "Genuine" Opposition decided to hold its coming-out rally at Plaza Miranda, people thought that the no-holds-barred campaigning of pre-martial law years would resume. But what a disappointment! Almost all of the speakers turned spineless, not even mentioning President Macapagal-Arroyo by name, even though evidently in the eyes of the people she was the issue. Only Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano directly attacked the President and the First Gentleman, as a result of which he received the loudest applause from the audience. With GMA receiving the highest disapproval rating (70 percent) so far among Philippine presidents, and with an approval rating of just 28 percent, it is amazing that the opposition does not make her the election issue, especially since her legitimacy is also under question. In mid-term elections, the presidency is always an issue, as shown by the American elections last year.

If the political opposition does not find its balls and remains pansy and pusillanimous, it can only blame itself if it is defeated in an election which gives it an advantage because of overwhelming public outrage against the present administration. This is because it has failed to articulate this outrage.

—MANUEL F. ALMARIO, mfalmario@yahoo.com

Pinpin detention a case of state terrorism

A DAY AFTER PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo signed the antiterrorism bill, the Amado V. Hernandez Resource Center (AVHRC) visited a "terrorist" named Axel Pinpin.

Pinpin is a poet who "immersed" himself with the masses in his desire to dedicate his writings in the service of the people. After serving as a science research specialist in the Department of Science and Technology from 1996 to 2000, he joined Kalipunan ng mga Magsasaka sa Kabite. He has since advocated farmers' causes. He felt that one must know the issues well to come up with a good piece of writing. A 1999 Fellow for Poetry in Filipino of the University of the Philippines Institute for Creative Writing (UP ICW), he has already published a poetry collection "Tugmaang Walang Tugma."

Pinpin was abducted by Philippine National Police elements with four other peasant organizers on April 28, 2006 in Tagaytay City. The Tagaytay 5, as they came to be known, were accused of plotting to destabilize the government. Based on Pinpin's own account, they were subjected to physical and mental torture during interrogation. On May 1 last year, they were presented to the media.

With the enactment of the antiterrorism bill, nearly all forms of protest and opposition against the current government may be deemed a terrorist act. A growing number of writers and artists serving the people are bound to suffer the same fate as Pinpin's.

The AVHRC has a petition-letter signed by concerned people belonging to various professions and sectors, among them National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera, Palanca awardee Rene Villanueva, pop culture expert Dr. Rolando Tolentino, writer/professor Ave Perez Jacob, film director Carlitos Siguion-Reyna, former Solicitor General Frank Chavez and former National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

We invite members of the press to join us in our next visits. We also request all those concerned to publicize this issue through petition letters, prison visits and cultural activities.

—JPAUL MANZANILLA, education and research officer, Amado V. Hernandez Resource Center (AVHRC)

Why is Aladyn singling out opposition bets?

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE ADVERTISEment put out by Aladyn against three senatorial candidates: Alan Peter Cayetano, Koko Pimentel and Noynoy Aquino.

The paid ad would have been believable if the tirade against dynasties were not limited to opposition candidates; if it had included Mike Defensor, whose aunt Miriam is also in the Senate, and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who has son Mikey representing Pampanga's second congressional district in the House of Representatives, while another son, Dato, will be running for congressman of Camarines Sur's first district.

Who are the people behind Aladyn? Where do they source their funds?

It is disheartening to know that even as Team Unity claims it will not use black propaganda in the coming polls, it is using a dummy group (and government funds?) to destroy the opposition.

If Aladyn is not a fictitious group and is truly sincere in its efforts to eradicate the dynasties in our political system, I dare its officers and members to come out in the open and show their faces in public. They should be proud of their crusade against dynasties.

Without a face, Aladyn is nothing but a myth. Just like Aladdin in our storybooks.

—ANITA L. SANTOS, 36 Aberdeen St., Project 8, Quezon City

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Palace victim of false information

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo instructed two Cabinet members to look into reports that a hunger strike was taking place in Hacienda Velez-Malaga in Barangay Robles, La Castellana, but it turned out that Malacañang was a victim of false information.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, who arrived in Negros Occidental Thursday afternoon, said he was surprised to learn when he arrived in La Castellana yesterday that no one there was on hunger strike.

The hunger strike was actually at the DAR office in Quezon City.

The trip of Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral to the area to bring food was cancelled after it was learned that there was no hunger strike, he said.

"There appears to be disinformation," said Pangandaman. He, however, could not say where the reports of the hunger strike came from.

Pangandaman said he also came to Negros as part of the ongoing assessment on the ground of the situation at Hacienda Velez-Malaga.

He said there have been "positive developments" and the DAR hoped to install farmer beneficiaries on the farm "soonest," he said.

He said the problem in Velez-Malaga was a conflict between two groups of beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

FARMERS on hunger strike in front of the DAR office in Quezon City wear chains to dramatize their demand to own the land they till. JOAN BONDOC

One hundred two farmers belonging to the peasant group Task Force Mapalad are demanding that the DAR install them on the property, but 178 other workers, who have organized themselves into farmers cooperative, are opposing the move.

The cooperative members, who were hired by the hacienda owners, claimed they were the original tillers but the prime area of the 144-hectare portion of the farm that was placed under CARP went instead to TFM members, many of whom, they said, were not workers of Hacienda Velez-Malaga.

They demanded that those who were not the initial tillers of the land be removed from the list of the beneficiaries.

Pangandaman said that while there were no more legal impediments to installing the farmer beneficiaries in Hacienda Velez-Malaga, the DAR would not force the installation as it could only lead to bloodshed between the two groups of farmers.

He said efforts are ongoing to strike a compromise between the opposing farmers with the help of personalities in Negros but he refused to mention names.

"These farm workers on both sides of the conflict are related so we hope to get them to agree to peacefully co-exist," he said.

Pangandaman also reacted sharply to calls for him to resign, made by the TFM.

"I will not resign. I serve at the pleasure of the President," he said.

He said should the TFM file charges against him at the Ombudsman, he was prepared to answer them.

He also said DAR critics in Manila should go to the estate to see for themselves the situation there.

"We are working silently," he said.

The TFM, however, said in a statement that their farmers would march to Malacañang to convince Ms Arroyo to step into the case.

"We don't anymore expect Secretary Nasser Pangandaman to install us. We hope the President can do it," said the TFM.

Fr. Romeo Intengan, S.J., said the issue is a bomb waiting to explode on the government's face.

"This issue will show what kind of government we have. There is no gray area in this issue," he said.

Bombs left by war between MILF, Army wounding villagers

PIKIT, NORTH COTABATO—FOUR years after the Buliok complex war between the military and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) had ended, people are still being harmed by unexploded bombs scattered in areas where the fighting took place.

Insp. Elias Dandan, Pikit police chief, said on Monday, a carpenter was injured when he hammered an M-79 shell he found a week ago.

Dandan said the explosion had severed Mamakan Tahir's left arm.

But Tahir, 40, survived the blast.

Two days earlier, 14-year-old Francisco Manansala found a rifle grenade in Barangay Kalakakan, one of the sites of the 2003 Buliok war.

He brought home the dilapidated explosive and toyed with it.

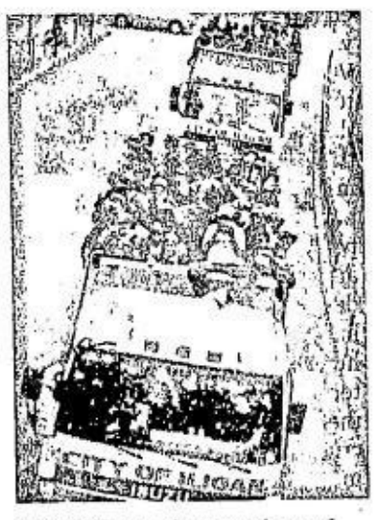
Dandan said the boy would throw the explosive up the air then catch it. It eventually fell to the ground and went off, wounding the child.

Dandan said there were already previous incidents, where civilians were injured by unexploded bombs from previous skirmishes between the military and the MILF.

"I appeal to all civilians in former war-torn barangays to be extra-careful and report to the police if they discover explosives," Dandan said.

Nongovernment organizations providing help to formerly displaced families have also expressed fear over unexploded bombs scattered in war-torn villages.

They said unless these are retrieved, the bombs would continue to be a threat to unsuspecting civilians.



TRUCKS carrying members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front pass through Iligan City in what some said was a show of force by the guerrilla group. War has been suspended between the MILF and the government but the destruction that previous clashes brought continues to bring harm to villages where the clashes took place. RICHEL UMEL/INQUIRER MINDANAO

A similar predicament also confronts residents of villages in nearby Midsayap town.

A few weeks ago, bombs fell on the villages as the military went after MILF rebels who raided a community in the town.

The situation in Midsayap remains volatile despite a localized truce as MILF rebels continue to threaten security, according to the police. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Use of Youth Day rites for pols assailed

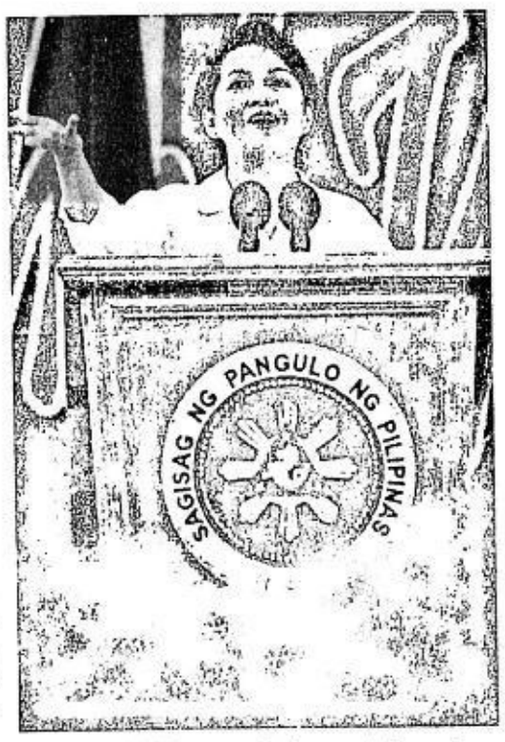
By Kit Bagaipo
Inquirer Visayas

TAGBILARAN CITY—Former Bohol governor Victor dela Serna slammed President Macapagal-Arroyo for using the Bohol Youth Day celebration as a venue for the Team Unity's two-day campaign here last week.

During a local radio interview, Dela Serna questioned the use of a youth gathering, which had been organized by the provincial and municipal governments using public funds, for the administration's campaign sortie.

Dela Serna noted that until last Saturday, the province did not hold Youth Day gatherings for so many years. The youth delegations were used as a captive audience of Team Unity during their Bohol sortie, he said.

Spearheaded by the National Youth Commission (NYC) and the local Sangguniang Kabataan Federation, the youth assembly drew an estimated crowd of 30,000, which packed the Carlos P. Garcia Sports Complex in Tagbilaran City.



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo delivers her speech during Youth Day rites in Tagbilaran City in Bohol. LYN RILLON

Days before the presidential visit to Bohol, Malacañang and local officials denied that the administration senatorial candidates would join the President in the Youth Day.

But all 12 candidates came to Bohol and attended the event.

Dela Serna said the youth affair was "exploited" and "highly-politicized." He said the five young Boholano achievers, who graced the affair, were sidelined when the President and the senatorial candidates took center stage.

NYC commissioner Benjie Oliva said each barangay was encouraged to send 10 to 15 delegates to the Youth Day rites.

At least P320 were paid for the food of each youth delegate, the money coming from barangay funds.

Oliva said at least 20,000 delegates were bused to the event.

Cops sue 22 in fatal hazing

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—POLICE FILED charges against 22 suspects in the killing of a 19-year-old engineering student of the Palawan State University who died during hazing at fraternity rites.

The charges were filed against the 22 for the killing of Roland Ceguiña, who was trying to enter the Tau Gamma Phi fraternity.

The charges have been filed at the city prosecutor's office Thursday afternoon, said Supt. David Martinez, city police chief.

"We now consider the case solved and closed," he said, adding that "we are just waiting for the court to issue the warrants of arrest against them (the suspects)."

Martinez said police have a strong case against the suspects based on the testimony of four survivors and a witness who was present when the hazing was done.

One of the 22 suspects is a 70-year-old American businessman, identified as Robert "Bob" Violett, a resident of the city, who owned and drove the Mitsubishi Adventure van used in dumping the body of the victim.

The victim's body was found at the Iwahig River here Wednesday.

Violett surrendered to authorities Thursday.

"What my client told me is he just lent his van to the group," said Violett's lawyer Nesario Awat in a mobile phone interview.

Violett, Gianne Verzoza and an eyewitness are now in police custody but the rest of the 22 suspects are still in hiding, said Martinez.

The principal suspects were identified as Melly Nolledo, Rex Alcantara, Joey Abin, Pantaleon Valdez, Israel Fortaleza a.k.a. Carding, Gary Naria, Zander Zapanta, Anthony Evina, Ray Ian Barapero, Jonalee Ivory Toang-Toang, Sonny Majegro, Lloyd Toang-Toang, Roger Alcantara, Eden Rick Canilla a.k.a. Lupin, Kenneth Tique, John Lerry Alegre, Gerald Cabate, James Dadule and a certain Baltazar a.k.a. Balting whose surname is still unknown. *Robert Bagalay, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Wish you could easily get rid of your Varicose Veins?

COOLTOUCH CTEV

There is no reason to continue enduring the pain, discomfort and unsightly disfigurement that is often caused by varicose veins. Many people have put off treatment thinking they would have to face vein stripping, which is major surgery requiring hospitalization, general anesthesia and several weeks of recovery time.
Now there is no reason to postpone treatment. The COOLTOUCH CTEV 1320nm offers a relatively pain-free, quick and highly successful treatment alternative that gets you back to your life quickly.

How does the COOLTOUCH CTEV 1320nm laser work?
With the COOLTOUCH CTEV, a small single needle incision is made in the leg and a fiber is inserted into the varicose vein. The laser is activated and as the fiber is moved through the vein it gently heats and safely closes the vein. Once the vein is closed, the blood that was circulating through this vein is simply rerouted to other healthy veins and the varicose vein essentially vanishes.

A simple office-based procedure
The COOLTOUCH CTEV procedure is minimally invasive and is performed right in your vein specialty doctor's office. You are awake during the entire procedure, but you feel very little if any pain, as your leg will be numbed using a local anesthetic. The procedure takes approximately 1 hour to perform per leg treated.

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One of the tremendous benefits of the COOLTOUCH CTEV procedure is that patients do not experience the incision scars or bruising that are often present with alternative treatments. Rarely thus bruising occur when the COOLTOUCH CTEV procedure is performed alone. And since the incision is so small, no stitches are necessary.

Rapid Relief from Symptoms
Your symptoms will begin to improve immediately after the COOLTOUCH CTEV procedure is completed. However, depending on severity, some symptoms may take 1-2 weeks to completely disappear.

Quick Return To Work and Play
After the procedure, your leg will be wrapped in a compression bandage and you will be up and walking the same day. You will be able to resume light routine activity the next day and athletic or strenuous activity within several days to a couple of weeks depending upon your specific case.

This laser procedure is **FIRST** available at the newly opened **Delos Santos-STI MegaClinic ARTERY & VEIN CENTER at the 5th floor of SM Megamall Bldg A,** staffed by certified cardiovascular Surgeons & Vascular Medicine Specialists. Do get in touch with us at **tel. nos.: 0910-8079795 / 6379661 loc 123.** The Cooltouch Endovenous Laser is exclusively distributed in the country by Spectrumed Inc. A laser company that's been pioneering state of the art technology for many years.
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INQUIRER Visayas

E-mail: inq_cebu@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/regions
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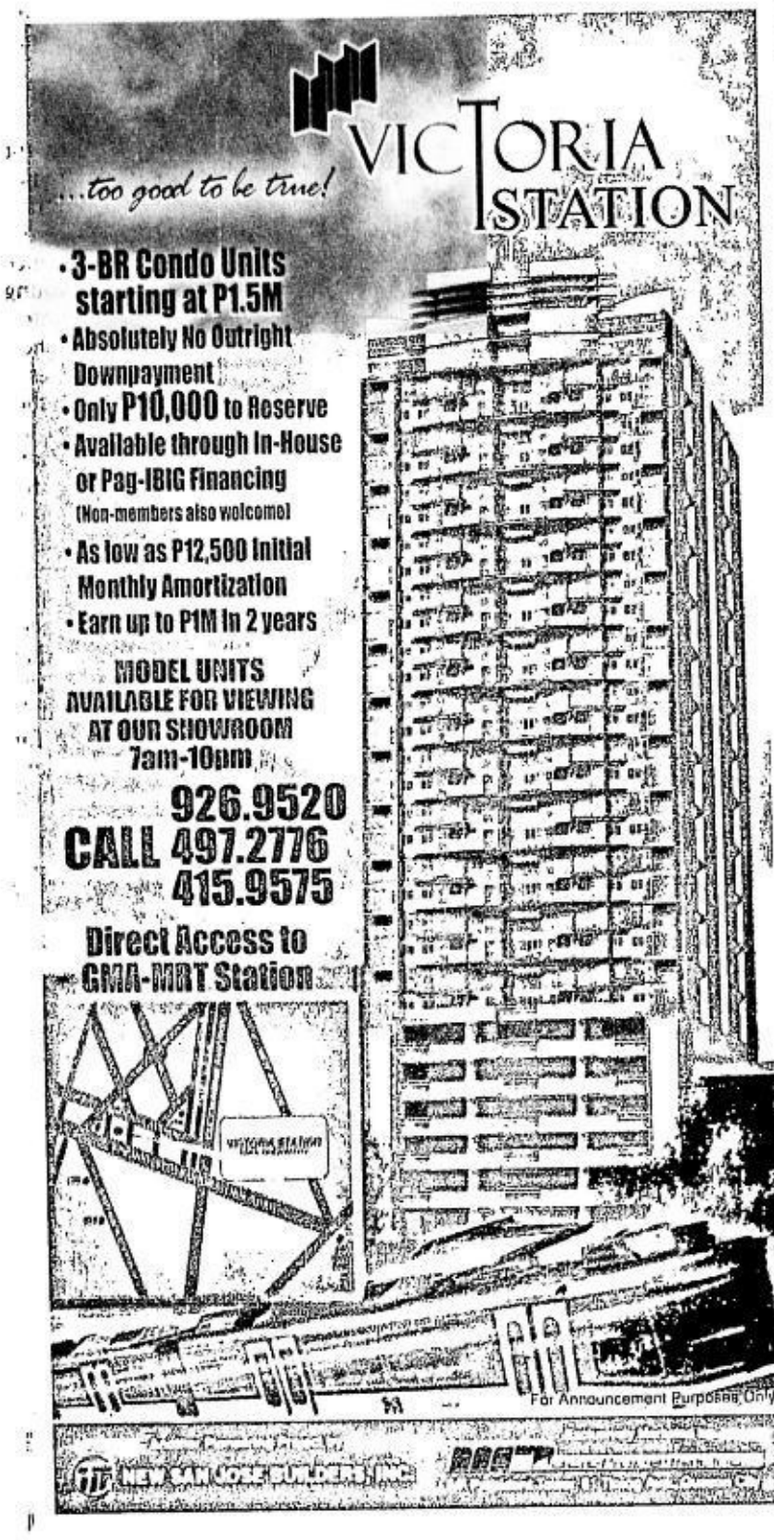
Women pay tribute to wartime women



By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Iloilo City

THREE MONTHS INTO THEIR graduation in December 1942, student nurses Candida Jimenea and Patria Jover of Emmanuel Hospital in Capiz were inducted into the nurse corps of the 6th Military District, a guerrilla force organized to fight Japanese soldiers during World War II.

They survived the war, got married and told war stories to their children and grandchildren. But they had a better chance of retelling them before a group of women here on March 8, during the International Women's Day celebration.

Jimenea, 86, now Mrs. Arandela, and Jover, 85, now Mrs. Mago, were given bouquets as a way of honoring them for their valor and for enduring the hardships alongside the soldiers.

Rose Asong, a professor at the University of the Philippines in the Visayas, called Arandela and Mago the "women wartime heroes," giving a face to hundreds of women who volunteered to support the resistance fighters as nurses, agents and couriers.

Asong, together with UPV professors Ma. Luisa Mabunay, and Tita Torio, wrote in their paper "The Ilonggas through the years," that there are few accounts of women who defied convention and stereotypes to take their place in professions and places reserved for men in the pre-colonial era and up to the first half of the 20th century. She said their research, which was also presented in slides containing old photographs, had barely scratched the surface in identifying high-profiled as well as less known women, in battlefields and everyday life.

Among the women highlighted in their research are those who joined the resistance against the Japanese occupation. Asong said the writing of Col. Cesar Hechanova entitled "Women in the War," yielded stories of women joining the war against Japan. But she also retrieved stories from the women themselves as well as from their friends and their children.

Among the women was Natividad Kasilag Peralta who organized chapters of the Women's Auxiliary Service (WAS) in Antique, Capiz and some towns in southern Iloilo. She served as cryptographer of the 6th Military District headquarters in times of heavy radio traffic.

CANDIDA Jimenea Arandela and Patria Jover Mago acknowledge the applause after receiving their bouquets. MA. DIOSA LABISTE

For pursuing projects and perpetuating the memory of World War II, Peralta was awarded the Degree of Legionnaire by the Philippine Legion of Honor.

In Aklan, the WAS chapter was headed by Corazon Quimpo; and in Pototan, Iloilo, by Silfide Perez, who later became Mrs. Zaldivar. She campaigned for clothing, beddings, materials for bandages and medicines. Nurse Faustina Trespeces Villanueva was remembered for treating soldiers bayoneted by the Japanese.

During the siege of Zarraga town, women from villages in the adjoining town of Dumangas brought food for guerrilla soldiers of the 62nd Regimental Combat Team.

Hechanova wrote that there were 71 women nurses and two women dentists in various medical units of the 6th Military District, working in base hospitals and joining the combat teams. The women were exposed to the same danger as the men soldiers.

Some of the nurses mentioned by Hechanova were Salome Alforte, Generosa Paspe, Monserrat Jaleco, Otilla Celo, Perpetua Magno, Teresa Paginado, Isabel Almario, Corazon Dy Rivera and Ramona Barrios.

Spies

Women also became the eyes and ears of the guerrillas. Mercedita Atas was a courier of Iloilo Civil Governor of the Resistance Tomas Confesor and Japanese Occupation Gov. Fermin Caram. This led to her family being interrogated and tortured.

Other special agents were Salvacion Jesena Patrimonio, Luisa Dequina Parcon and Esperanza Villanueva. The latter hid messages in her hair knotted like a bun but somehow the Japanese found out and she was executed as a spy of the guerrillas.

Coronacion Chiva's exploits as a member of the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Hukbalahap) was legendary. Asong said Chiva, popularly known as "Kumander Walingwaling," led a squadron of armed men along the boundaries of Iloilo, Capiz and Antique.

Chiva went on to be a member of the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB), the armed group of the old Communist Party of the Philippines in the 1950s until the breakup of the armed groups in the provinces. When martial law was declared in 1972, she supported the New People's Army and even led a squadron of men. Chiva was assassinated by government agents in 1977.

Courage and daring

Mago and Arandela said their wartime memories are fading but they have never forgotten the courage and daring of soldiers and young nurses like them.

Mago remembered the cruelty of the Japanese soldiers against the civilians. "Before the war there were Japanese shopkeepers in Iloilo and I have always known them to be polite because they kept on bowing to their customers. I was shocked to learn how cruel they became when their country occupied us," she said.

Arandela recalled taking care of a young soldier who was wounded when a bullet exited from his right chest and blood was squirting from his wound at a slight movement.

Many years later, they met each other and learned that their daughters were classmates. He thanked her profusely for saving his life but Arandela said she doesn't want to claim the credit because it was, after all, the will of God that he was alive.

My Grandma was a superstar.

"She will always be a superstar in the hearts of many. Bright, bubbly, never ran out of kind words for just about everyone, giving full support, giving guidance, providing strength. That's how she will be remembered... forever."

Thanks to the Sanctuarium my grandma's star will forever shine in the hearts of family & friends.
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Teacher testifies against recruiter

By Carla P. Gomez
Bacolod City

SHE LEFT HER TEACHING JOB in Bacolod City for a more lucrative one in El Paso, Texas, or so she thought. She decided to take on the job promised in Texas because she was told her monthly salary in the US would be more than her annual salary in the Philippines, plus she would have the chance to become a US resident.

Instead, she and other Filipino teachers went through a harrowing experience, victims of a white-collar smuggling scheme.

The Bacoleña, who has been allowed to stay in the US in exchange for testifying against their recruiter, and her co-victims, are awaiting the verdict on the case which is being tried before the federal court.

The El Paso Times reported on its website www.elpasotimes.com on March 10 that the prosecution last week rested after more than a month of testimony in the case against Noel Cedro Tolentino, his wife Angelica Tolentino and his mother Florita Tolentino, officials of the recruiting firm OMNI Consortium based in Houston.

The 38-year-old teacher said she, two other Bacoleña public school teachers, one from southern Negros Occidental and others from around the Philippines, were recruited for teaching jobs in El Paso, Texas nearly four years ago. They arrived in Texas on Aug. 1, 2003 and were kept at McAllen, Texas, 14 hours away from El Paso by bus.

"They told us our positions at the Ysleta Independent School District (YISD) no longer existed and every week they gave us a different reason why we had no work," she said.

Other Filipino teachers promised jobs in other school districts were also jobless, she said. Money was tight and there were times they hardly had enough food, she added.

She recalled that she and the other teachers lived in fear of being picked up by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). "Every night we prayed the rosary. We could not sleep until the wee hours of the morning. We were stressed, worried about our families back home and we often wept," she said.

On top of their fear, she said, is the worry about how they could repay the huge debts they incurred to pay the recruiter's placement fees as they have given up their jobs in the Philippines.

When the authorities raided the other apartments where Filipino teachers stayed in the third week of August 2003, she decided to get in touch, through a friend, with the INS to seek help, she said.

She told the US immigration agent, who got in touch with her, that she decided to seek government help as she and the other teachers were victims.

On Sept. 9, 2003, she and some other teachers arrived at El Paso where they were aided by US authorities.

"The US government helped us a lot, like giving us food, shelter and clothing that time. It was more than we expected, and all we did was to thank God and the US government for giving us back our own worth as professionals," she said.

The US government gave the Bacoleña and the other teachers, who testified against the accused, employment authorization cards and deferred action letters for their status in the US, which allowed them to work while the trial was ongoing.

The three accused were indicted on about 40 counts, including conspiracy to smuggle aliens, visa fraud and money laundering, the El Paso Times reported. The jury is expected to return March 19 to hear the defense.

The US attorney's office has said that 273 Filipino teachers were brought to the United States from 2002 to 2004 and that fewer than 100 actually had jobs waiting for them.

Son remembers RM's 50th death anniversary

From page A1

sire to follow in the footsteps of my father, a much-respected and revered leader of his people?

As I look back and compare how I have performed as a public servant, using the yardstick of high standards set by my father during his administration, I can sincerely say this, "Dad, I tried and did my best to follow your example and good works. With the help of my fellow senators and public servants, we made a few successful forays to improve society and governance. I am inspired by your honesty and simplicity, the greatness in spirit you practiced as your people's servant-leader, which continues to be a model for our present and future leaders."

I grew up exposed to the intrigues and intricacies of public service. My mother and sisters would talk about my father's work and I had observed how my old man worked and thought at the Palace.

Clearing up bureaucracy

I admired his unique ways to address the problems brought before him, whether by a peasant or a high official. I envied the energy and determination that marked his reforms, and his genuine desire to make more responsible and honest men out of the bureaucrats under him.

All these became a large part of the information I formed about my father, which greatly influenced me and became the foundation of my adult life.

His toughness and uncompromising stand against dishonesty and graft, his terse and sometimes premature firing of certain officials whom he felt were taking advantage of their positions, and his humble acceptance of honest mistakes struck fear, even scorn, among his men. He did not hesitate to fire, admonish publicly, and put the guilty "on the carpet" for public cleaning. But the effect was dramatic, the result was the shaping up, not only of erring personnel, but the shaping up of the bureaucracy in general.

He had successfully cleaned up the corrupt and dreaded Philippine Constabulary (PC) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and established better relations between the soldiers and poor farmers who were constantly terrorized by the marauding Huks.

P10-centavo telegram

Because of his intercession, he helped the soldiers earn the people's trust and respect due them as the true protector of the common people. Complaints were relayed to his office as people made use of the 10-centavo telegram which the Presidential Complaints and Action Commission (PCAC) under Manny Manahan and Frisco San Juan, and other young turks of his administration, effectively manned and managed.

How was I to stack up to this great man who practically burned himself out serving the common Filipino? In all honesty and humility, I know I never could. But it was impossible to resist the rare chance of serving the country and people my father held close to his heart.

As a neophyte senator in 1995, I accepted and chaired the committee of science and technology. Like my late father, I was drawn to anything mechanical and technical. He was considered a techie himself in 1920 when, at the age of 13, he overhauled and rebuilt an old Model T Ford to working condition.

'Techie-ness'

This early sign of "techie-ness" he passed on to me when I was taught to drive at age 11 using his second-hand Willy's Jeep (WW II vintage) in 1949. I was thrilled and felt important as my two sisters and mother would sit behind and silently observe my progress. It was a treat driving every Saturday afternoon, ending with an early dinner at the Aristocrat Restaurant in then Dewey Boulevard, (now Roxas).

Opening retail trade

As a senator, I authored and sponsored some of the most innovative statutes covering highly technical matters: E-commerce Law, the Metrology Act, Anti-Money Laundering Law, Integrated Circuits Law and Foreign Investments Act.

In 1998, the first year of the Estrada administration, the new President decided to repeal the Retail Trade Law (RA 1180), the very law that my father worked determinedly to ratify to empower Filipino retailers. The passage of the law dragged on for 20 years and spanned the administration of four presidents (Quezon, Osmeña, Roxas and Quirino, all vetoed) until Magsaysay finally enacted RA 1180 removing foreign ownership and control of Philippine trade.

Then President Joseph Estrada saw the need to open up retail trade once again to foreigners, and I was moved to oppose it.

Then chairman of the committee on trade and industry, Sen. Serge Osmeña and myself, along with a few others, passionately engaged in plenary debate. Aware of the deep concern and controversy my father experienced in 1954 when the issue was at its peak, I owed it to him to keep the law sacred, as a gesture of Filipinism and patriotism of a political leader to his own people.

Though the retail trade law was eventually repealed with 16 affirmative as against five negative votes, we learned, as leaders, the value of accepting and listening to dissenting views.

Second term

In 2001, I won a second term after a bitter and divisive political reelection campaign. I was chosen by then Senate President Franklin Drilon to chair the committee on national defense.

Having lived among soldiers and officers in Camp Murphy (now Camp Aguinaldo) when my father was secretary of defense, has greatly impressed on me the professionalism, discipline and patriotism of the men of the Armed Forces.

A highly controversial incident, the Lamitan kidnapping which involved the Abu Sayyaf group in Basilan abducting foreign and local hostages happened in 2002. Drilon sanctioned our defense committee to organize a group of senators to visit Basilan and make an ocular inspection of the kidnapping site and its aftermath.

Then Sen. Noli de Castro, Senators Ping Lacson and Greg Honasan obliged, and a series of public hearings in Lamitan and in the Senate were conducted on issues of culpability and command responsibility of the officers and men of the Armed Forces.

The result was a report signed by 20 of the senators recommending the court martial of several key military officers.

On my second term, I assumed a more pro-active approach on advocacies I knew my father would approve.

As chair of the committee on agriculture and food, I reviewed the programs on rural economy given high priority by my father: resettling the landless, introducing support programs to make farmers more self-reliant and productive, organizing farmers' cooperatives and community development, assisting retired soldiers and insurgents who returned to mainstream society, providing scholarships to the poor but deserving young Filipinos and putting up water works projects all over the country.

Fertilizer fund scam

I was also able to launch the Young Farmers Program which extends grants to deserving graduates to practice agriculture enterprise. The program has since assisted more than 150 young men and women graduates, many of them operating their own successful agri-enterprises.

Bearing in mind what my father believed that "leaders should set an example of a big heart, an honest mind... and abiding love for the common man," my committee sought inquiry on the fertilizer fund scam, considered to be a masterpiece on graft and corruption.

Finally, without sounding hackneyed, I continue to believe that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

This is the true roadmap for the leader who wants to regain the people's confidence in their government.

DPWH lawyer ties Ebdane to lampposts scam

From page A1

At a hearing yesterday at the Visayas Ombudsman's Office, which is investigating the P120-million lamppost project, it was revealed that Ebdane, the then public works secretary, had ordered the installation of 30 of the pricey street lamps in a private resort on Mactan island.

The Visayas Ombudsman's Office has been conducting an investigation into the controversial project for the past two weeks. The investigation was prompted by complaints that the lampposts, alleged to cost from P83,000 to P350,000 each, were overpriced by as much as 2,000 percent. Various estimates placed the actual price at P11,000 and P30,000, including the cost of installing them.

The P120 million spent for the street lamps was part of the P800-million beautification project that the DPWH carried out in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu, which hosted the 12th summit of Asean leaders.

The street lamps were supposed to be installed in the summit's ceremonial route, the streets that the delegates and guests would traverse while going to and from the conference venues.

Agustinito Hermoso, the DPWH regional legal counsel, said it was Ebdane who directed that the 30 decorative lampposts, costing P83,000 each, be installed at the Porto Fino Beach Resort, a private resort in Lapu-Lapu City.

Hermoso said Ebdane's directive also carried a marginal note from Marciano Paynor Jr., the chair of the summit's national organizing committee.

The resort was earlier identified as an alternate site for the summit's ministerial conferences. However, the schedule of meetings did not include Porto Fino among the meeting venues although it housed the summit secretariat and the security personnel.

Virginia Palanca-Santiago, the officer in charge of the Visayas Ombudsman's Office, earlier asked the DPWH and the Porto Fino resort's management to explain how the lampposts came to be installed on private property.

Beth Pilorin, the DPWH public information officer, denied that Ebdane had anything to do with the ballooning controversy.

"Procurement of lampposts was done in the DPWH office in Cebu. Former Public Works Secretary [Hermogenes] Ebdane had nothing to do with the procurement," she said.

The DPWH central office in Manila handled all the money transactions for the summit expenses, DPWH officials in Cebu told the hearing last Thursday.

A Porto Fino executive, who refused to be named, said the resort would not make any comment but would give a statement to the Ombudsman.

GMA orders probe

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) to conduct a thorough investigation of the alleged overpricing and prosecute those involved.

In a radio interview here, Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde said the President has directed PAGC chair Constancia de Guzman to investigate not just the allegedly overpriced lampposts, but all the other projects for the Asean summit funded by the national government.

Summit bill: P1B

Government spending for the hosting of the Asean summit reached more than P1 billion.

Remonde said the President wanted to show the Cebuanos that she "will not and will never tolerate any abuses in the government."

"She wanted to file immediately the charges against all those concerned regardless of who they are. In other words, let the chips fall where they may," he said.

Msgr. Achilles Dakay, media liaison officer of the Cebu Archdiocese, said Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal was saddened by the controversy.

Dakay said the alleged overpricing may be related to the coming elections. The money could have benefited some politicians planning to run in May, he said.

Santiago said her office has been conducting marathon conferences with officials from the Bureau of Customs, the DPWH and the DBM on the controversy based on a complaint filed by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and Crisologo Saavedra.

"We are now evaluating the evidence to finally determine if indeed there is probable cause to proceed with a preliminary investigation on the complaint," Santiago said in a statement.

"We still don't see the need to summon the other local government officials as we only just got hold of the documents from the Bureau of Customs. We will evaluate the documents and we will determine if we still see the need to summon other officials," Santiago said in a telephone interview.

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(ZAMCELCO)
Putik, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of CONCRETE POLES on consignment basis, to wit:

No	Quantity	Unit	Item Description
01	200	pcs.	ROUND CENTRIFUGAL PRESTRESSED CONCRETE POLES
			Approved Budget Cost P11,070.00

Specification:
Pole Length 10.67 m (35 Footer)
Design Load 500 Kg.

Note: The supplier must have the plant to manufacture concrete poles.

You may secure the Pre-Qualification Requirements from the Office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-Qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 p.m. of March 13, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

Bidding will be conducted on **March 20, 2007.**

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bidds and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of **March 20, 2007.** Five percent (5%) Bidders' Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI - March 16 & 17, 2007)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

The **NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY** is inviting offers to purchase by way of sealed bids the following commercial properties on an ***"As Is – Where Is"*** basis, on **FIRST TENDER:**

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BASE PRICE/ SQ. METER
01-045	45 commercial lots, 73 sqm. to 297 sqm	Ph. XI, Bagong Silang Caloocan City	P3,520/sqm to P3,600/sqm
The following items are now qualified for **NEGOTIATED SALE:**			
01-04	4 commercial lots, 241 sqm. to 470 sqm.	Ph. X, Pkg. 6, Bagong Silang, Caloocan City	P2,400/sqm.
05-032	28 commercial lots 74 sqm to 324 sqm	Mayon Vista Ligao City, Albay	P1,600/sqm to P1,785/sqm
033	1 commercial lot 6,032 sqm	Sea Breeze Homes Brgy Sip-Ac, Sorsogon City	P600/sqm
034-053	20 commercial lots 351 sqm to 496 sqm.	NHA Teachers' Vill. Brgy Cabaluay Zamboanga City	P1,304.55/sqm P1,400/sqm

All properties are covered with individual titles and the repayment period is for a maximum of ten (10) years at an interest rate of 18% per annum.

For those who will participate in the public bidding, BIDDING MATERIALS may be secured for a non-refundable fee of PhP200.00 from the Commercial & Industrial Bids and Awards Committee (COINBAC), c/o CIED, 2nd Floor, NHA Building, Elliptical Road, Q.C. For inquiry, please call Ms. Evelyn V. Ramos at the ff. tel. nos.: 922-3002, 928-4561 loc. 262-263.

	ACTIVITY	SCHEDULE	VENUE
A.	Submission of Pre-qualification Requirements	March 19 to 26, '07 office hours	CIED, 2nd Floor NHA Main Bldg. Q.C.
B.	Pre-Bid Conference	March 22, '07 10:00 am	Operations Center 3rd Floor, NHA Main Bldg.
C.	Submission of Sealed Bids	March 28, '07 9:00 am to 12 nn	Operations Center
D.	Opening of Bids	March 28, '07 1:30 pm	Operations Center

Letters of Intent for items for negotiated sale may be secured from CIED or from the following Project Offices:

PROJECT	CONTACT PERSON	OFFICE/TEL NOS.
Bicol Projects	Engr. Alberto Perfecto Project Manager	2nd Floor, Quililin Bldg., Ligao City, Albay 052-4852963, 052-4852955
Zamboanga Project	Doris A. Siao OIC	Nationwide Appliance Center, Inc. Bldg. Veterans Avenue, Zamboanga City
Bagong Silang Project	Engr. Ramon Reside Project Manager	NHA Project Office, Lot 7, Block 9 Phase I, Area I, Bagong Silang, Cal. City

The NHA reserves the right to reject any or all bid offers and applications for negotiated sale, or any part thereof or to waive any required formalities and accept offers/ applications most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) **FROILAN R. KAMPITAN**
Chairperson, COINBAC
Assistant General Manager

(PDI – March 17 & 20, 2007)

PREMYO SA RESIBO

Congratulations to the 9th Millionaire for the year 2007!

February 23, 2007
Draw **Millionaire!**

Atty. Gregorio Cabantac BIR Deputy Commissioner Legal and Inspection Group awards the **P1 Million** check to **Ms. Maria Theresa D. Salalac,** housewife from **Caloocan City.** Assisting in the awarding ceremony is Mr. July Pena, PAGCOR representative.

The next **Premyo Sa Resibo** draw will be on **March 23, 2007.**
Draw will be aired on ABC 5 at 10:30pm.
Official Receipts from **February 1, 2007** to **March 22, 2007** are qualified for this draw.

Premyo Sa Resibo Instructions :

Type-in the text message in this format:
PSR<space>TIN of establishment<asterisk>Receipt Number<asterisk>Amount
text to 9777 for single entries or (Smart, Globe and Sun subscribers)
text to 9778 for multiple entries. (Smart and Globe only)

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A WORLD LEADER IN GANODERMA-BASED HEALTH PRODUCTS

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In its vast complex of ganoderma plantation (biggest in the world) and newly expanded 32-acre office-factory that boasts of world-class, state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities with GMP and ISO 9001-2000 certification, Gano Excel is continuously doing deep research to perfect the quality of its current products while developing new products for every health need. Its first products that have made an impact on people's health are Ganoderma and Excellium, 100% pure extract in capsule form.

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Gano Excel has the distinction of giving popular beverages such as coffee, chocolate, and tea a new twist - fortifying them with the health-empowering nutrients of ganoderma. Thus emerged its now acclaimed Gano Cafe 3-in-1, Gano Cafe Classic, Gano Cafe Mocha, Gano Tongkat Ali, Gano Schokolade, Gano SOD Tea and Gano Cereal. Other product lines with ganoderma extract as common ingredient followed: Personal Care (Gano Soap, Gano Fresh Toothpaste, Silk Basic Shampoo, Silk Basic Conditioner, Reishi Wash, Gano Balm), Skin Care (G'Beaute Facial Scrub, G'Beaute Moisturizing Mask & Purifying Mask, G'Beaute White Toner, G'Beaute Eye Gel, and G'Beaute Body Lotion).

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Within just a little more than a decade, Gano Excel has expanded rapidly to 30 countries around the globe. From Malaysia, it established branch offices and affiliate companies in the USA, Canada, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, Philippines, HongKong, India, Australia, Puerto Rico, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, New Zealand, Romania, and Chile, to name some. It is racing toward its vision of targeting 100 countries by 2010.

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- No.1 Direct Selling Company, Food Supplements Category, 2004
- Outstanding Multilevel Marketing Company Award, Asia Pacific Excellence Awards, 2003

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Nationwide branches:

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Manila : 742.7315 / 495.0035
Edsa Branch, QC : 410.7005
Starmall,Mand.: 725.8848
Metro East, Rizal : 681.9384
MetroPoint, Pasay

LUZON
Rosario : 046-437.8948
Dasmariñas : 046-416.4053
Baguio : 074-446.5033
Dagupan : 075-522.8588
Cabanatuan : 044-464.3045
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C.A.P. AUDITORIUM AUDA ST. DAVAO CITY, 1:30pm
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SEVEN (7) new sensational products to hit the Philippine market.

Satur is arrested at Supreme Court

From page A1

"As I've promised, after filing the petition, I will submit myself to the jurisdiction of the court," a red-eyed Ocampo, 67, told reporters after he was handed a copy of the warrant by Supt. Eduardo Sierra.

He said he decided to yield to the police because the high court "can't take cognizance of my [petition] until I'm under their custody."

A phalanx of policemen led Ocampo into a black SUV of former Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. and whisked him off to the MPD headquarters, as photographers and TV crews jostled around him.

With Ocampo in the packed vehicle were his wife, Carolina Malay, lawyer Romeo Capulong, Guingona, Sen. Jamby Madrigal, opposition senatorial candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, and a handful of policemen, who sat at the back.

Quisumbing steps in

A barong-clad Ocampo showed up at the court 3:30 p.m. to file his petition for certiorari and prohibition.

As he and Bayan Muna officials walked to the building, Superintendent Sierra suddenly turned up with the arrest warrant.

Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing, who had come out to meet Ocampo, waved off the officer, advising him to allow the lawmaker to file his petition first.

Quisumbing said Chief Justice Reynato Puno had told him to meet the lawmaker.

Sierra cooled his heels for an hour.

Recycled skeletons

Speaking to reporters, Ocampo accused the military top brass of lying and of falsifying the charges against him by using recycled skeletons as supposed evidence of a mass grave.

Ocampo said five of the 15 skeletons allegedly found in Hilongos, Leyte, as evidence of mass killings had actually been also previously dug up in Barangay Monterico in Albay in 2004.

He said he and his lawyers had been able to find another case involving the same skeletons.

"*I accuse Gen. Hermogenes Esperon na naglilipat-lipat siya ng mga buto. Hindi yun genuine na sinasabi niyang mass grave* (I accuse Gen. Hermogenes Esperon of shuffling these bones around. The mass graves he was talking about were not genuine)," Ocampo said.

Perjury charges

"How can this happen? There can't be two bodies. What Esperon did was dig these up and transfer these. This shows how fake the charges are," he said.

Ocampo protested that he could not have been present when the alleged killings took place in the 1980s because he was then being held as a political prisoner by the military under the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Ocampo's lawyer Romeo Capulong said he would file charges of perjury and malicious prosecution, as well as administrative charges, against the military leadership and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, who were supposedly involved in bringing the charges against his client.

"What happened here is pure fabrication and perjured statements," Capulong said.

In his petition, Ocampo asked the court to release him, or to put him under the protective custody of the Speaker of the House or any humanitarian or religious institution.

He also sought a temporary restraining order to stop the proceedings in the regional trial court in Hilongos, and asked the high court to quash the cases filed against him and his other co-accused.

A Leyte judge issued the warrants for Ocampo, Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Ma. Sison, and National Democratic Front negotiator Luis Jalandoni, and 50 others in connection with the alleged executions. They denied the charges. All had been granted general amnesty following Marcos' ouster.

Cloak and dagger

Some members of the media went through what seemed like a cloak-and-dagger operation before they got to see Ocampo.

At past noon, before Ocampo appeared at the Supreme Court, media members in three vans were driven from somewhere in Quezon City for what they were told was a news conference to be given by Ocampo at an undisclosed place.

For three hours, the vans drove around Quezon City, Manila, Makati City, and Pasay City, and then stopped in Manila.

Along the way, the media people were told to follow a black SUV, which later drove into the high court compound.

It was only then that they realized that Ocampo was in the black car. It appeared earlier plans for him to hold a news conference before he went to court had been scrapped.

Satur said he knew he was taking a risk by emerging from hiding.

"I know they would serve the warrant but I told them we would wait for the decision of the Supreme Court regarding (our TRO)," he said.

He said he was not afraid to face arrest and that the government had a weak case against him.

Ocampo's hopes of quickly obtaining a temporary restraining order from the high tribunal were dashed.

Court order

In an order that allowed the police to keep Ocampo in their custody, at least for now, the high tribunal said it was setting his petition for oral arguments on March 23. It required the respondents to file a comment in five days upon receiving the directive.

The respondents were Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Hilongos Regional Trial Court Ephrem Abando, Approving Prosecutor Cesar Merin and Investigating Prosecutor Rosulo Vivero.

Ocampo looked relaxed when he was brought to the MPD. He waved at the media and his supporters waiting outside.

But his face fell when he received the news about the Supreme Court order.

Nonetheless, he said: "This is a welcome move, I'm happy that the court acted quickly."

He said he didn't mind spending time in jail.

No special treatment

"I'm used to sleeping in different places, I'm willing to wait for a week for the judicial process to proceed and resolve this issue," he added.

According to Supt. Hospicio Guevarra, chief of the MPD General Assignment Section, his office would serve as a holding area for Ocampo.

"We will transfer him later to the Warrant Section for usual procedure—documentation, finger-printing, mugshots and all," Guevarra said.

While he said that no special treatment would be given Ocampo, Guevarra added he would just let the congressman stay at his office or at the Warrant Section because the detention facility was congested.

"And also for security reasons, but we will treat him like any ordinary arrested person," he said.

Escaped in 1985

Ocampo, president of the Bayan Muna party-list group, was also arrested in 1976 while the country was under martial law. Severely tortured by his captors, who electrocuted him in his private parts to make him talk, he escaped in 1985.

After Marcos fell, he surfaced and headed the NDF panel in peace talks. He went underground again in 1987 after protesting farmers were gunned down by troops on the then Mendiola Bridge.

He was arrested again in 1989 but freed three years later without having been found guilty of any crime. *With reports from Tina G. Santos, AP, AFP*

Palace allies hit US: Look who's talking? Hearing one-sided

From page A1

ty said the United States should examine its own rights record.

"Look who's talking," said Joker Arroyo. "Suddenly, the United States and the leftist organizations it had called terrorists are now one. How can you see now the credibility of the US? One day it is against leftists; the next day, it is with leftists, who are now its principal witnesses."

Arroyo said he had repeatedly told Malacañang not to participate in what he called "a marriage for convenience" between the United States and Philippine militant organizations.

"It would seem that the arrangement with the US is only a temporary arrangement—marriage for convenience and then love-hate. Love today, hate tomorrow. We cannot have that kind of relationship; that is not a long-lasting one," he said.

Edgardo Angara said the US Patriot Act, the equivalent of the Philippines' new antiterror law, was "more repressive than ours."

"You can be detained almost indefinitely under the Patriot Act, and you don't need a court warrant to open up your bank account, search your papers, your house, and snoop into your telephone. Very intrusive," he said.

Angara said the Philippine government should not be rattled by the statements of American lawmakers conducting the inquiry as the US panel would still have to submit its recommendations to the leadership of the US Congress, which may choose to implement it or not.

But he said the government could not "sweep under the rug" international inquiries into its rights record because the Philippines was a signatory to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Doing enough

Both Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye reiterated that the Arroyo administration had taken steps to stop the killings of journalists and leftist activists.

But they offered no new measures to address the specific concerns aired during the US inquiry in Washington, DC.

Ermita expressed confidence that the US government remained convinced that President Macapagal-Arroyo was doing enough to stop the killings and would not withhold military aid.

The President herself declined to comment on the statements issued during the US inquiry and referred reporters to Bunye, her spokesperson. She said she wanted to concentrate on economic issues.

Bunye issued a statement saying: "We take note of the interest shown by the US Senate and other international bodies in the Philippine human rights situation and we share a consensus with the world that unjust killings must be resolved whoever the perpetrators are, whether rebels or wayward soldiers.

"Evidence against suspects is being beefed up, special courts are being opened for speedy and fair trial, special investigators and prosecutors are comparing notes to move forward on indictments."

These were the same steps the Arroyo administration had announced since international organizations, including a team led by United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, criticized the unresolved killings.

"The Philippines has a strong commitment to right these wrongs and enforce criminal justice in the same degree that we are committed to social justice under a vibrant free market. We appreciate the interest and concern of the United States, a longtime ally for democracy and freedom, on this issue," Bunye said.

Ermita said the US government knew that Ms Arroyo was "doing enough to be able to really stop all these unexplained killings."

"In other words, this is not a government policy," Ermita told reporters at the book launching of former President Fidel Ramos on Thursday night.

US soldiers' scandals

Gonzalez said the Philippine military was being condemned despite the fact that US soldiers had their own share of scandals:

"It's unfair that we are condemned immediately, yet in their own statement they say they appreciated efforts of the Philippines versus terrorism. The people they can't arrest in America, we can catch, but we are accused of violation of human rights. Why can they not explain what is happening in Guantanamo, in Iraq? Why is our military always the subject of these kinds of attacks, yet American soldiers are sentenced to 100 years imprisonment for violations of human rights?"

Gonzalez also assailed the militant groups who welcomed the US inquiry: "These are the people who have been crying anti-American slogans before, and now they are jumping like zombies to welcome the Americans here. They're hypocrites."

He said the human rights group Karapatan did not even want to participate in the Melo Commission's inquiry, and discouraged the parents of two missing University of the Philippines students from attending the commission's hearings.

Gonzalez also accused the Philippine media of dispensing antigovernment propaganda to the United States: "Our own media are the ones feeding the foreigners what is happening in this country. Are we happy about that? Are we happy that we are putting our country down?"

Strong ties

But in Legazpi City, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said the RP-US military partnership would not be affected by the US inquiry.

Kenney told reporters that the US panel was merely exploring the issue.

"This is just an information session, which is of great interest. And frankly, the people of the United States and the US Congress, like the Philippine Congress, care about human rights. They care about the Philippines, so what they're doing is learning and hearing from people. And that, I think, is important," she said.

She also expressed the belief that the Philippine government had "a very serious action plan" to address the killings.

"And I think the key now is for all of us to look at how we can help it be implemented. Create the right climate here. It's a beautiful country and a vibrant democracy. We want it to stay that way," she said, adding:

"The military ties between our countries have been extremely strong. Both of our nations' democracies take human rights extremely seriously. We want to look together, as we're doing, at how we can work to prevent human rights problems."

Kenney, along with Sen. Richard Gordon, head of the Philippine National Red Cross, and representatives of the US Agency for International Development, visited Legazpi yesterday to look into the progress of "Goodwill-Kaibigan," the weeklong humanitarian program being conducted by US Marines and Philippine troops for the benefit of typhoon victims. *With a report from Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Miriam wants Senate to probe US rights record

IN A TIT-FOR-TAT GESTURE, Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago said the Senate foreign relations committee which she chairs would conduct an inquiry in July into the extrajudicial killings that the US government purportedly committed in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo in Cuba.

Santiago called on her fellow senators and the Team Unity candidates to speak up on what she called "US meddling" in Philippine politics.

"I condemn as a violation of international law the US Senate panel's hearings on alleged Philippine extrajudicial killings. World politics is still basically state-oriented. The doctrine of equal sovereignty in law and the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs are both well settled," she said in a statement issued yesterday.

She pointed out that the Senate had the right to comment on this foreign policy issue. "So far, all we have heard are the inane statements of the candidates and their TV ads indicating infinite mediocrity. If the candidates don't speak up on this issue, they're probably dimwitted and deserve to lose," she said.

Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

COA: ₱419M CARP funds used for food, phones, travel, etc.

From page A1

form (the lead CARP implementing agency), Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, and Public Works and Highways, as well as the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and Land Registration Authority (LRA).

The audit of Agrarian Reform Funds (ARF) generated from the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos' ill-gotten wealth—which the government has been trying to recover for the past 21 years—was conducted from March to June 30 last year.

The COA report, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, showed that "substantial amounts" were used to finance regular activities or pay "unauthorized, unnecessary and excessive" claims and allowances of CIA employees.

"Agrarian reform beneficiaries did not obtain maximum benefits from the amounts reimbursed from the forfeited Swiss deposits," the COA said.

Of the $624 million (or P35 billion) in Marcos ill-gotten wealth, P16.153 billion has been transferred to the ARF as of Dec. 31, 2005.

Suspicious purchases

The COA said DAR officials and employees in the Office of the Secretary alone had spent P4.160 million in line service and prepaid card expenses.

A suspicious purchase by the same office of 110 mobile phones amounting to a whopping P3.089 million was also disclosed in the report.

Per records, the DAR procured 58 mobile phones worth P1.667 million (with prices ranging from P16,227 to P32,500) in 2004, and another 52 units worth P1.421 million (from P10,000 to P48,000) in 2005.

The DAR had explained that top officials and selected technical staff were provided cell phones to facilitate communication and consultation and allow for "speedy delivery of public service."

An inspection of the mobile phones showed that three units worth P65,800 were lost, and that one worth P32,500 was not returned by an employee who has transferred to another office, the DAR had reported.

But the COA said that:

- Of the total amount spent on the cell phones, only about P288,000 was used to purchase directly from the suppliers, and the rest was used to reimburse three DAR personnel.
- The names of the recipients were not printed on the Acknowledgment Receipt of Equipment, which the DAR could not submit despite a verbal request from the COA.
- Service lines subscribed from Globe and Smart came with free cell phones.

"Hence, the procurement of 110 cell phone units is already questionable unless it can be demonstrated that the same were given to other authorized cell phone users not enjoying line services," the COA said.

It also said the purchase of a unit worth P48,000 was unreasonable.

The COA also said non-CARP personnel of the LRA, who had already been provided Smart line services under the General Fund, but were still furnished Globe services and prepaid cards, used up P552,243.57 in communication expenses.

Medicines, etc.

Among the other "questionable expenses" was the DAR purchase of P4 million worth of medicines, the COA said.

It said the medicines were delivered to the provincial government of Catanduanes, nine congressmen (Luis Villafuerte, Eduardo Suarez, Rafael Nantes, Eileen Buhain, Aurelio Umali, Manuel Ortega, Ding Roman, Lorenzo Tañada, and Eduardo Fermalo) and three governors (Josephine Sato, Bellaflor Castillo and Leandro Barceles) of Catanduanes.

The DAR had said that the medicines were purchased based on representations made by the local government officials in support of their health services program involving farmers.

But the COA pointed out that the conduct of medical missions was a task of the local government units and the Department of Health.

Also, it said, no documents were shown to prove that the medicines had reached the farmer-beneficiaries.

The other DAR expenses that ate into the fund intended for farmers were P2.3 million in clothing allowance, more than P2.4 million in insurance expenses and P2.5 million in janitorial fees, the COA said.

It also said that three LRA officials spent more than P1 million in food expenses in 2004 and 2005, and that the costs of travels not related to CARP and amounting to more than P88,000 were also charged against the ARF.

It added that the DENR spent about P1.8 million in travel costs, workshops and seminars, procurement of office furniture and construction materials, and repair and maintenance of office buildings.

Total amount

In all, questionable expenses worth more than P345 million were made by the DAR, P11 million by the LRA, P55 million by the NIA and DPWH, and P7 million by the DENR.

The bulk of the questioned expenses involved the payment of collective negotiation benefits, cash gifts and bonuses to DAR employees that were charged to the ARF.

SPORTS

Realtors, Gin Kings nail breakthrough wins

PINT-SIZED playmaker Paul Artadi of the Purefoods Tender Juicy Giants tries to steal the ball from Sta. Lucia's 6-foot-9 behemoth Marlou Aquino. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

GAME TODAY (*Lanao Del Norte*)
6 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs. San Miguel

By Musong R. Castillo

AFTER TAKING A BEATING THE FIRST TWO games, Sta. Lucia dished out one of its own at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Realtors finally played to their true potential last night and bamboozled an overmatched Purefoods side, 102-87, for their first win in the PBA Fiesta Cup that restored all the confidence the team lost in the last two weeks.

Super rookie Kelly Williams scored 16 of his 21 points in the first three periods and helped the Realtors break away as Sta. Lucia posted leads of as many as 24 points to win for the first time in three games.

The loss was the third straight for the depleted Tender Juicy Giants, who got 34 points from cornerstone James Yap but only four in limited minutes from import Jesse King.

Barangay Ginebra also broke through later, but not after surviving a scare from Welcoat in a 99-97 victory.

Johnny Abarrientos hit a triple with 75 seconds left that cushioned a scoreless Ginebra spell from there and gave the reigning Philippine Cup champion Gin Kings an even 1-1 card.

Charles Clark missed the potential game-tying turnaround at the buzzer as the Dragons dropped to 1-2.

"I'm happy that I finally got the monkey off my back," Sta. Lucia's rookie coach Boyet Fernandez later said. "Even after two losses, I wasn't ready to push the panic button because I knew that we would somehow adapt to the system."

Late Sports

The victory comes as a whiff of fresh air for the Realtors, who were labeled as the heavy favorites in the tournament after their roster was left untouched by the National team last month only to lose in horrid manner to Air21 and Welcoat.

But that air could turn sour again with the rumor mill abuzz that Williams will be tapped by Chot Reyes, a former Sta. Lucia mentor who now handles the RP Five, in the coming days to take the place of Rudy Hatfield.

"Frankly speaking, I'm happy for Kelly," Fernandez added. "He deserves to be in the National team and I won't be a hindrance for him in getting the honor to play for the country. *"Di ko pipigilan yan."*

The scores:

First Game

STA. LUCIA 102—Williams 21, Winston 12, Omolon 12, Espino 10, Duremdes 9, Catli 8, Cabagnot 7, Gonzales 6, Mendoza 6, Calimag 4, Aquino 3, Bughao 2, Isip 2.

PUREFOODS 85—Yap 34, Evangelista 12, Castillo 11, Salvador 8, Yee 7, Artadi 5, King 4, Bautista 2, Gamboa 2, Camaso 0.

Quarters: 24-16, 50-40, 73-57, 102-85.

Second Game

BARANGAY GINEBRA 99—Nealy 26, Tubid 18, Salvacion 14, Hatfield 10, Macapagal 9, Mamaril 8, Abarrientos 7, Seigle 3, Echavez 2, Menk 2, Hubalde 0.

WELCOAT 97—Clark 26, Compton 21, Reyes 20, Ibanez 12, Gelig 6, Lopez 5, Baguion 3, Cabatu 2, Wainwright 2, Sta. Maria 0, Lao 0.

Quarters: 23-17, 44-42, 77-63, 99-97

Juvic fires 2nd 68; Frankie, Que out

SANYA, CHINA—JUVIC PAGUNSAN FIRED A second straight four-under-par 68 and lay in joint 19th spot, nine shots off the pace set by Thai sensation Chapchai Nirat halfway through the TCL Classic on Friday at the Yalong Bay Golf Club.

Frankie Miñoza and Angelo Que, however, missed the cut at four-under 140 despite a 69 and 70, respectively. Miñoza (141) could only match par 72 in the first round despite producing the shot of the tournament—an albatross on the 544-yard 13th hole when he holed his second shot.

Pagunsan, the Asian Tour rookie of the year, stood at 136 and was a mere three shots off a five-man logjam at second. *Asian Tour News*

Peña fights way to 14th place

MELBOURNE—STILL SMARTING FROM a minor slip-up that dashed his hopes of a top 10 finish in the opening race on Thursday, Dado Peña audaciously blitzed his way from the back of the grid to finish 14th in Race 2 of the Formula Three support event to the Melbourne Formula One Grand Prix on Friday at Albert Park here.

Starting 14th on the grid in the initial race, the 19-year-old Peña moved up to 12th after just two laps of the eight-lap race and made it to 10th with a lap to go. But the lone Filipino in the field miscalculated a hard right on the 5.303-kilometer street circuit and caught the grass with his rear left wheel, causing him to spin out of the race.

Despite starting 28th on the grid in Race 2, however, Peña passed 14 drivers and finished the race—reduced to six laps earlier in the day—in 12 minutes and 56.489 seconds.

"I was a bit too cautious at the start," Peña said. "But not bad, I guess."

Race 3 is set Saturday afternoon and Race 4 on Sunday morning.

Charlie Hollings of England, who raced in the Asian Formula Three series last year, topped the opening race and finished second in Race 2, behind Australian F3 coleader leader Tim Macrow.

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Parricide charges junked against magazine editor

By DJ Yap

A MAKATI PROSECUTOR HAS JUNKED THE parricide charges filed against the husband of slain media executive Delia Gutierrez, whose bloodied body was found in her office last September.

Assistant City Prosecutor Henry Salazar said police investigators failed to establish probable cause that Ibarra Gutierrez was responsible for his wife's death. Delia was the president and chief executive officer of Media G8Way Corp., publisher of the computer magazine PC World. Ibarra served as chair of the company and editor of the magazine.

In a resolution, Salazar said the police failed to present sufficient evidence during the preliminary investigation that would link Ibarra to Delia's death. There was no sufficient evidence to warrant a finding of probable cause for the crime of parricide, he said.

It could even be inferred that Delia had committed suicide, the prosecutor added.

Salazar said the investigators relied mostly on circumstantial evidence and could not fully establish why Ibarra would want to kill his wife. He said the evidence did not indicate a struggle or that the victim had been assaulted. "There were no defense wounds found in the hands and arms of the deceased... which would "indicate that there was no commotion and that the deceased was not assaulted," he said.

In the "absence of any tell-tale signs of a struggle, it cannot with reasonable certainty be concluded that the deceased was killed. On the contrary, the absence thereof favors a reasonable inference that she may have committed suicide," the prosecutor wrote.

On Sept. 6, Delia's lifeless body was found in the office toilet at the Eurovilla II Building at 118 Rufino St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. She had several stab wounds on the chest and a slash on the neck.

During the preliminary investigation, the Makati police relied on the testimony of several witnesses, mostly company employees who said Ibarra was the last person they saw entering the victim's office.

They also cited findings of the initial autopsy conducted by Voltaire Nulud, the medico-legal officer. Nulud said the "wounds inflicted on the body of the deceased were not self-inflicted and that she did not commit suicide."

The couple's children, Paolo Lorenzo, Debra Andrea, Juan Carlo and Miguel Raymundo later filed a motion seeking the dismissal of the case, which they described as "absolutely preposterous," and cited the second autopsy conducted by University of the Philippines forensic pathologist Raquel Fortun, who contradicted Nulud's initial findings. Fortun said her analysis of witnesses' accounts, the crime scene and two autopsy procedures indicated "the death was intentional and self-inflicted."

Ibarra said his wife may have committed suicide as she appeared to be despondent weeks before her death over the company's financial difficulties.

Niño caught with shabu; out on bail

ERIK ARAZAS
NIÑO Muhlach

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FOR A CHANGE, THIS 35-year-old actor who virtually grew up in front of the cameras did not want any attention.

While court employees and curious bystanders scrambled over chairs and benches to get a glimpse of Niño Muhlach, the former child actor demanded that the door of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 104 be kept locked.

The actor, Angelo Jose Rocha Muhlach in real life, arrived at the QC RTC at 3 p.m. yesterday to post a P200,000 bail for his temporary liberty. Muhlach was arrested on Tuesday night after he was caught allegedly accepting a sachet containing 1.9 grams of methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu) from a suspected drug peddler at the Shopwise supermarket in Libis, Quezon City.

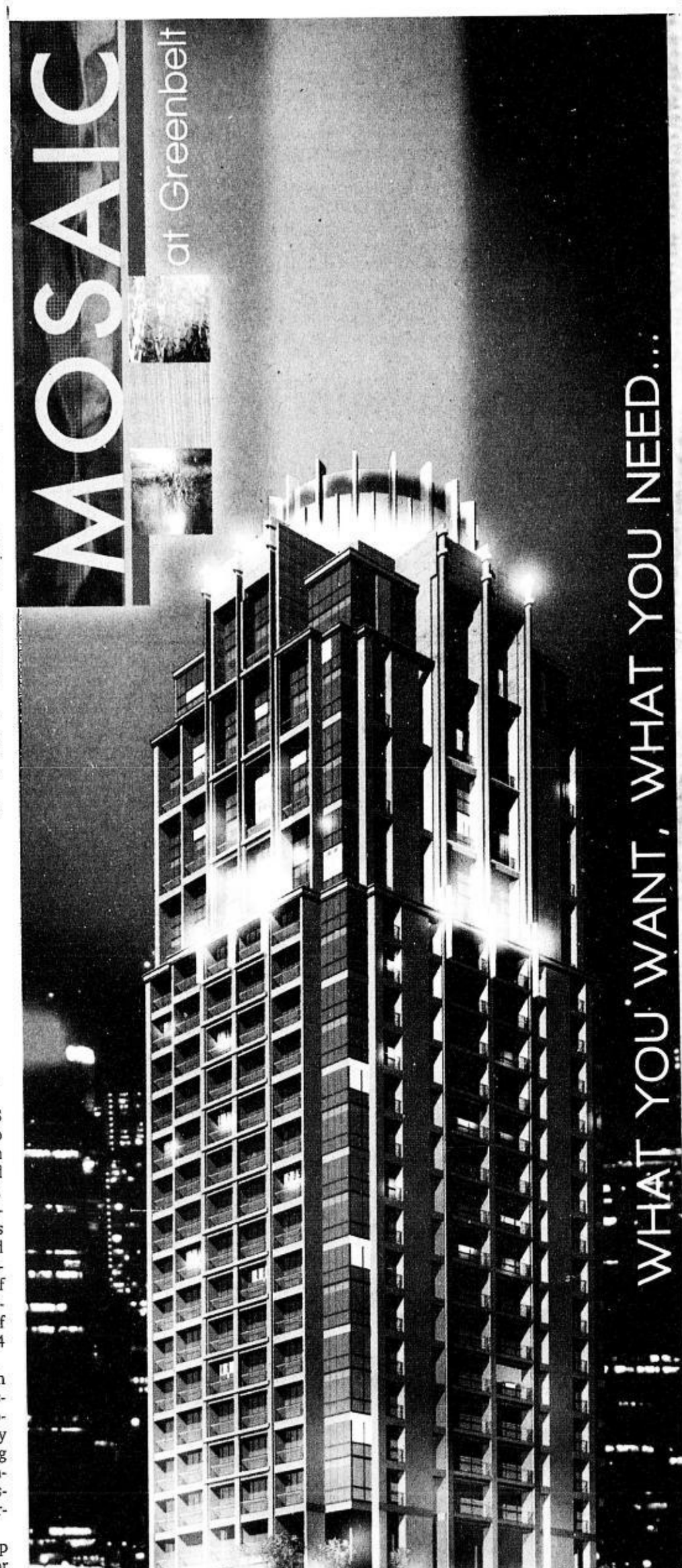
Muhlach asked his police escorts to keep the media outside the courtroom. The actor was not wearing any handcuffs when he entered the Quezon City Hall of Justice. Upon the posting of the cash bail, Judge Thelma Ponferrada ordered Muhlach's release. The actor left the hall late yesterday afternoon.

Earlier yesterday, the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office formally filed a case against Muhlach for violation of Section 11 of Republic Act No. 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Court documents showed that Bicutan police received information concerning an illegal drug transaction involving a certain Niño at Shopwise on March 13.

Acting on the tip, PO3 Enrique Eusebio and PO1 Joshue Lauron positioned themselves near the accused who was sitting at a table at the supermart's food court. The policemen then saw a woman seating herself beside

NIÑO/ A22



Taiwanese couple nabbed for fraud, estafa

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) arrested on Thursday a Taiwanese couple who allegedly defrauded several business entities of more than P111 million.

Hsieh Hsin Lin, 53, and his wife Peng Ching Ting, 44, were incorporators of Ta Shen Textile Inc., a company engaged in the manufacture, wholesale and retail of textiles, clothing and fabrics which they put up in Barangay Maguyam, Silang, Cavite.

The pair was arrested by virtue of warrants of arrest issued by the Manila Regional Trial Court. They are also facing a string of criminal charges filed in the Quezon City courts for estafa and violation of the anti-bouncing checks law, the NBI said.

Regional Director Ruel Lasala of the NBI National Capital Region said the suspects, using their company as a front, ordered various commodities from various suppliers of textiles and fabric as well as bunker oil for their equipment and machines.

He said the suspects honored their commitment to pay for the initial transactions but later reneged on their obligations, letting their issued checks bounce on purpose.

The NBI said among the companies allegedly swindled by the couple were Puu Yueh Textile Company Ltd., Colorline Industries Inc., Edro Trading/Newport Trading, and businessmen Erwin Key and James Martin.

NBI officials said they are now trying to determine how the couple was able to engage in business in the country despite being issued only tourist visas by the Bureau of Immigration. "They even became incorporators and officers of a company despite restrictions on their visas, and without any authorization by the government," Lasala said.

A check made by the bureau with the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office showed that the suspects were on the wanted list for various criminal offenses in Taiwan.

Criminal charges for physical injury, fraud and falsification of documents have also been filed against the couple in the Taoyuan Prosecutor's Office.

The NBI said they are encouraging other victims to surface and file their complaints against the suspects.

Singer, wife file grave threats raps vs student

By Jeannette I. Andrade

WAS IT A CASE OF FATAL ATTRACTION or righteous indignation that drove a 17-year-old girl to threaten singer Janno Gibbs and his actress-wife Bing Loyzaga?

The question cropped up yesterday as singer Janno Gibbs and his actress-wife Bing Loyzaga yesterday formally filed charges against the teenager for grave threats allegedly contained in more than 900 text messages and phone calls made to the couple in less than a month.

The complaint filed by Gibbs in the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office, investigators of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation Unit (QCPD-CIU) showed that from Feb. 25 to midnight of March 15 the singer allegedly received 50 text messages and phone calls daily from the 17-year-old, a student of a girl's college in the city.

An investigator who declined to be identified said the tone of the messages seemed to have come from a person who may have been aggrieved by Gibbs, but until the suspect files counter-charges against the singer, he said they had no way of determining what triggered the 950 text messages and phone calls from the teenager.

The girl, who comes from a rich family in Novaliches, Quezon City, according to the INQUIRER source, had claimed she and Gibbs met on several occasions for casual sex since last year. The crooner belied the allegation and denied knowing the teener.

The suspect has been released in the custody of her parents who are reportedly contemplating on filing possible counter-charges against Gibbs based on their daughter's claim that the singer had an intimate relationship with her.

Both parties are expected to meet in a preliminary investigation to be conducted by the city prosecutor's office.

Niño caught with shabu . . . From page A21

Muhlach and handing something to him under the table.

When they saw Muhlach inspecting the object, Eusebio and Lauron approached him and seized the sachet containing 1.9 grams of shabu. But the female suspect was able to escape. Muhlach was brought to Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan where he was detained for three nights.

Supt. Rommel Miranda, the National Capital Region Police Office public information officer, clarified yesterday that they were not giving special treatment to Muhlach.

He said the actor had merely requested that he be kept away from the media.

With a report from Julie A. Aurelio

Antipolo City administrator, driver survive ambush

By Santiago R. Alcantara

TWO MOTORCYCLE-RIDING MEN SHOT at a vehicle carrying the city administrator of Antipolo and his driver yesterday in the city, but missed their target.

Rizal Police Chief Senior Supt. Freddie Panen identified the victims as lawyer Gilbert Lauengco, 40, of Beverly Hills Subdivision, Barangay Beverly Hills, Antipolo City, and his driver Marvin Villanueva of Barangay Mayamot, also in Antipolo. The attack happened at 12:45 p.m. at Taktak Road, Barangay Dela Paz.

Investigators said Lauengco and Villanueva were on a van on their way to a meeting at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Antipolo office when bonnet-wearing suspects on board a red motorcycle shot at the car window three times. Two other suspects acted as lookouts, investigators said.

The pair was unhurt after the incident.

Lauengco is said to be close to Mayor Angelito Gatlabayan who is reportedly running for Congress in the second district of Antipolo against actor and Rizal Vice Gov. Jestoni Alarcon.

DPWH official in high-stakes gambling

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, THIS COLUMN reported about a provincial official of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) who was losing hundreds of thousands of pesos in the casinos regularly.

This official has failed the government's lifestyle check. The Ombudsman has charged the DPWH official with graft for owning property and assets worth a hundred million pesos like a construction firm, a five-story hotel and an insurance business.

Contractors dealing with the DPWH are clients of the hotel and the insurance business.

My spies at the DPWH say this official, now assigned in Metro Manila, is back to his old ways: losing hundreds of thousands at the casinos. One time, he lost P500,000 in one night.

Either the official doesn't know how to handle too much money, or he's trying to get away from his wife, according to my spies.

You see, the official is henpecked and his wife practically runs his office, to the consternation of his subordinates.

The DPWH official reportedly has his eyes on a sub-Cabinet post in the department. If he gets the position, his wife will be in his office while he loses more money at the casinos.

By the way, when President Marcos passed a presidential decree establishing the casinos, he made these off-limits to government officials and employees. What happened to that ban?

* * *

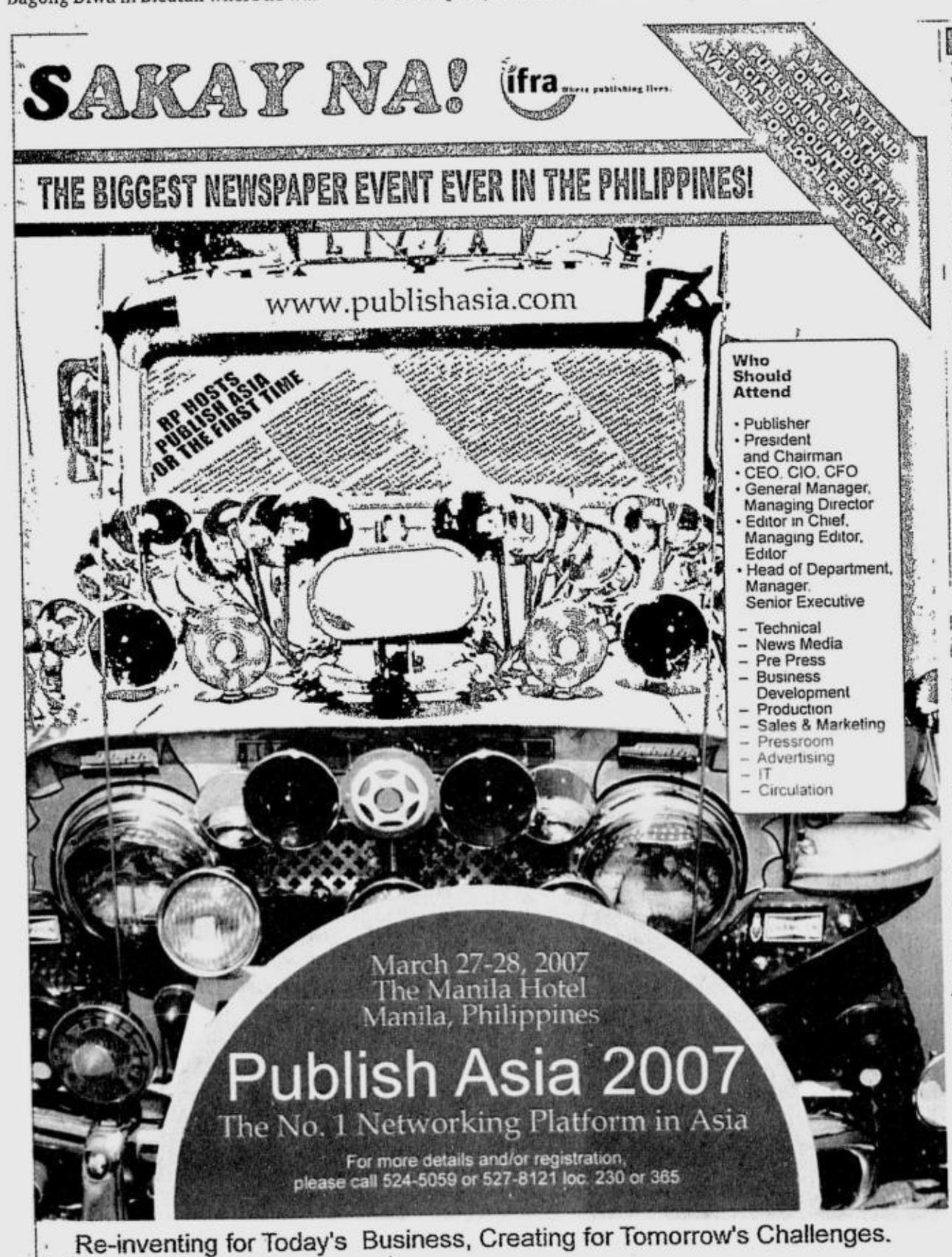
This corner has received good feedback on its resolve to prod the Department of Justice to act on the P315-million smuggling and tax evasion case against Oilink International Corp., the oil supply firm of Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc.

"You are doing motorists a big service, Mon. I remember that years back the DOE (Department of Energy) took punitive action against Unioil for (allegedly) selling substandard gasoline. Your exposé shows the kind of people behind these companies," said a Chinese-Filipino friend.

He was reacting to my series of reports on the smuggling and tax evasion cases filed against Oilink and brokers Noel Aro, Rolando Valeriano and Norman Galera.

However, the cases have been gathering dust at the DOJ, thanks, but no thanks, to a DOJ official. A check with a friend at the DOE showed that then Energy Secretary Vincent Perez himself discovered the Unioil irregularity after inspecting gas stations in 2004.

What Perez found was that Unioil had a research octane number (RON) of 89, well below the described RON of 92 or 93, my DOE friend said.



Conference Programme

Tuesday, 27 March 2007
Welcome Address
Attorney Miguel Varela, President of ManilaBulletin and Chairman Emeritus of the PhilippineChamber of Commerce and Industries. Philippines
Reiner Mittelbach, CEO, Ifra, Germany
Keynote Presentation:Reinventing for Today's Business, Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges
•The monumental challenges facing the newspaper industry today
•Harnessing new technology to re-invent and re-structure
•Continuing to ensure high ethical standards and commitment to quality
Murdoch MacLennan, CEO, Telegraph Media Group, United Kingdom
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Session 1 Business and Strategy
Moderator David O Valdes, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Philippine Daily Inquirer,Philippines
A Strategy for Integration
•Synergies through coordination and cooperation of business areas•Cross promotional efforts
•Digital strategy, exploiting potential niches via community publications
David O. Valdes, Executive Vice President andChief Operating Officer, Philippine Daily Inquirer,Philippines
Parallel Session 1
Semi-Commercial Printing
Entering the Semi-Commercial Market
•Retro fitting presses
•Practical insights
Moderator: *Manfred Werfel, Research Director and Deputy CEO, Ifra, Germany*
An interactive panel discussion with the publishing community comprising of publishers, industry vendors and end users will be held at the end of the session.
Investment Models - CASH daily
•How the next generation of customers are presenting the media industry with new challenges
•First results after launching a world-premiere cross-media product
•'CASH daily', the information platform for those interested in business.
Thomas Trueb, Member of the Group Management,Ringier, Switzerland
Lunch, Expo Visit
Strategy for Staying Ahead: Product Diversification
•Why it makes sense to widen your portfolio of products
•Attracting new audiences
•Functioning business models
Siddharth Kothari, Director, Rajasthan Patrika, India
Parallel Session 2
Distribution Realities of Asia
Overview of challenges for Distribution and Circulation Management
•What are the options to address these challenges
•How can newspaper industry collectively accelerate transition from where they are today to where they should be
Case study - Magic of Beer Distribution
Panel discussion of Circulation and Distribution
Moderator.*Cyril Pereira, Principal, Telesis Consulting Limited,Hong Kong*
A Strategy for Integrated Newsrooms
•Why publishers need to integrate•The challenges to overcome
•The convergence project at The Daily Telegraph
Dr. Dietmar Schantin, Director of Newsplex, Ifra, Germany
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Session 2 Digital Media
Launching a Community Site
•How to develop and market community sites
•Managing communities
•Creating synergies among other news channels
Chew V. Ming, Executive Content Producer,STOMP, Singapore Press Holdings, Singapore
Parallel Session 3
Change Management in the Newsroom
•The situation of change and re-organisaton in newsrooms today
•How the success of re-organisation depends on good change management
•Examples of best practice and worst practice of change management in the newsroom
•Methods and tips to help increase acceptance of change
Sarah Schantin Williams, Associate Consultant,Ifra Newsplex, Germany
Search Engines Strategies for Newspapers
•New commercial and editorial arenas opened by search for an online news organization
•What search engines can tell you about your own site and your own readers
•Search engine optimization
Jo Christian Oterhals, Head of Development,VG Multimedia, Norway
Mobile Publishing
•"Made for Mobile" content: How the mobile customer is seeking exclusive differentiated content on his handset
•Moving from a product-centric thought process to a consumer-centric thought process
•Looking through the prism of a newspaper-driven media house
Saurav Sen, Head of Business - Telecoms &Internet, ABP Pvt Ltd, India
Closing Comments of first day
Welcome Dinner
Wednesday, 28 March 2007
Moderator, Jim Chisholm, Joint Principal, iMedia, France
Session 3 Advertising Strategies
Building Across Media Advertising Strategies
•How to structure sales strategy
•Developing packages
•Classifieds strategy
Jim Chisholm, Joint Principal, iMedia, France
Parallel Session 1
Workflow Management -Production, Editorial, Advertising
•Reducing the cost of operations
•Minimizing manpower
•Reducing time to press
•Facilitating the entire operation with integrated solutions
Moderator: *Manfred Werfel, Research Director and DeputyCEO, Ifra, Germany*
An interactive panel discussion with the publishing community comprising of publishers, industry vendors and end users will be held at the end of the session.
Multi-Media Sales Model
•How to create successful sales teams
•Print/online classified strategies
•How to reward staff
Robert C. Granfeldt, Vice President Consulting Moms DigitalWorks, USA
The Google Economy
•How publishers can partner with Google to generate new revenue streams
Speaker to be confirmed
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Online Classifieds- Speurders.nl
•Launching an online classifieds site in a highly competitive market
•Practical steps on how to develop a site
•Challenges for the future
Leon Kramer, Marketing Manager, Speurders nl,The Netherlands
Panel Discussion:Competing for the Advertisers' Budget
•At a time when advertiser across the world are reviewing their marketing strategies, shifting revenues from traditional media and developing new strategies for attracting and retaining consumers, this session examines the views of key decision makers in marketing and outlines how you can increase your share of the advertisers' budget
Speakers to be confirmed
Lunch, Expo Visit
Session 4 Circulation, Readership and Audience
Sessions hosted by **Inma**
The Brand Positioning of The Times of India
•Applying brand management principles to aproduct portfolio
•Capitalizing on a growth market to win market share
Ravi Dhariwal, Executive Director, The Times ofIndia India
Parallel Session 2
Waste Management
•Key performance indicators for newspapers
•What should be measured and what results can be achieved
Speaker to be confirmed
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Strategy Development of Korea SportsNewpapers - IS
•How IS (sister newspaper of JoongAng Ilbo) worked out operational and restructuring strategies
•Pursued differentiation strategies
Changhee Park, Director/Strategic PlanningOffice, JoongAng Ilbo, Seoul, South Korea
Eyeballs and Audiences: Ideas and TrendsWorldwide
•Tap into the unique "INMA Conversation"worldwide and learn about the best ideas to grow newspaper circulation, readership and audience
•Harvest the best examples of product, price and promotion in this global tour de force presentation
Earl J. Wilkinson, Executive Director, INMA USA
Closing Summary of the Conference
Asia Media Awards Gala Dinner

Event Activities

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Back by popular requests, take fulladvantage of the **Publish Asia 2007 Golf Tournament** to network with industry leaders head at one of the finest golf courses in Manila on March 29, Thursday.

A **Welcome Dinner reception** will be hosted by Manila Bulletin on the evening of Tuesday 27 March from 18.00hrs onwards. All delegates are invited for a guided plant tour at Manila Bulletin on the same evening.

On Wednesday, 28 March, The Philippine Department of Tourism and the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation hosts a Philippine Cocktails at the Puerta Real in the Old Walled City of Manila, featuring cultural and folk presentations.

The **6th Annual Asia Media Awards Gala Dinner** will also be on **Wednesday, 28 March** at the closing finale of the event. All the evening functions require RSVP. More information will be made available on www.publishasia.com

Please note: Ifra Asia reserves the right to alter the program as necessary. Information provided as accurate as possible at the time of printing. Please check www.publishasia.com for regular program updates.

China enacts law to protect private property explicitly

THE CLOSING session of the National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing March 16. China's parliament overwhelmingly approved a property law that has sparked controversy by offering unprecedented protection to the private sector. AFP

BEIJING—AFTER MORE THAN A QUARTER-century of market-oriented economic policies and record-setting growth, China on Friday enacted its first law to protect private property explicitly.

The measure, which was delayed a year ago amid vocal opposition from resurgent socialist intellectuals and old-line, left-leaning members of the ruling Communist Party, is viewed by its supporters as building a new and more secure legal foundation for private entrepreneurs and the country's urban middle-class home and car owners.

But delays in pushing it through the Communist Party's generally pliant legislative arm, called the National People's Congress, and a ban on news media discussion of the draft law, raise questions about the underlying intentions and the governing style of President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, experts say.

Despite a high level of interest in the law among intellectuals and businessmen and the unexpected decision last year to withdraw the measure from the legislative agenda at the last minute, neither leader has spoken about the matter publicly. Wen's two-hour address to the nation on the opening day of the annual two-week legislative session last week did not mention property rights.

The measure could not pass the legislature, which acts under the party's authority, without the active support of the top leadership. Yet the conspicuous silence of Hu and Wen appears to be a form of tribute to the lingering influence of current and former officials and leading scholars who argue that China's economic policies have fueled corruption and enriched the elite at the expense of the poor and the environment.

The leadership did not so much overcome opposition to the property law as forbid it. Unlike in 2005, when leaders invited broad discussion about property rights, the latest drafts of the law were not widely circulated.

While the final wording of the law—and the nature of any compromises that were necessary to build a consensus within the party to pass it—remain unclear, many mainstream scholars and business people have welcomed it.

But the leadership's strategy did not resolve the underlying tensions. Hundreds of scholars and retired officials signed a petition in February against the law, which they said "overturns the basic system of socialism."

Supporters of the law dispute the assertion that it will protect the ill-gotten gains of corruption, arguing that it protects only legal property. *NYT*

WORLDBRIEFS

Big powers clinch deal on new Iran sanctions

UNITED NATIONS—Six major world powers on Thursday agreed on a package of broader UN sanctions against Iran as Tehran stood firm in its refusal to suspend its controversial nuclear work. UN ambassadors from the six countries announced a deal on a new sanctions resolution that was submitted to the UN Security Council's 10 non-permanent members ahead of a vote expected next week. The compromise text emerged after 10 days of hard-nosed bargaining by the Council's five veto-wielding permanent members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany. "Yes, we have an agreement," Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin told reporters after a final round of talks on how to rein in Iran's suspected efforts to develop a nuclear bomb. The agreement virtually ensures that measures to broaden existing sanctions and impose some new ones will be approved by the 15-member council when the draft is put to a vote, likely next week. *AFP*

Stuck 10 months at Moscow airport

OTTAWA—An Iranian family stranded at the Moscow airport for 10 months, sleeping on floors and surviving on food scraps while awaiting admission to Canada, has finally arrived in this country, media reported Thursday. Zahra Kamalfar and her two children had been forced to live at the Sheremetyevo International Airport in Moscow since May 2006 while their Canadian refugee claim was reviewed, her attorney told public broadcaster CBC. The family had fled Iran in 2004. Using false documents, they attempted to travel to Canada through Russia and Germany, lawyer Negar Azmudeh said. But they were intercepted by German authorities in Frankfurt and sent back to Russia. While in Russia, they appealed to the United Nations refugee agency to help them gain asylum, citing cited political persecution in Iran. But their claim was rejected because of a miscommunication with a Farsi interpreter, Azmudeh said. The family spent several months under house arrest at a Moscow hotel until Russian authorities relocated them last May to the airport, where they had no access to showers, slept on the floor and depended on airport staff for food. *AFP*

WAN protests vs France, Australia media restrictions

THE WORLD Association of Newspapers and a coalition of the world's leading news agencies today protested against severe restrictions placed on press coverage of this year's Rugby World Cup in France, and said the restrictions imposed by the International Rugby Board "are a serious breach of freedom of the press." And in a separate action, WAN and the news agencies protested to the Australian Football League against its refusal to provide media accreditation to global and foreign news organizations for any games in the 2007 season. The AFL has announced the creation of its own exclusive agency to provide the media with AFL images. WAN, representing the world's newspapers, and the coalition of news agencies including Agence France-Presse, The Associated Press, Reuters and Getty Images, told the International Rugby Board and the AFL that they would explore their legal options and inform event sponsors of "the very clear loss of exposure from which they will suffer owing to these restrictions." "Your position reflects, frankly, a lack of understanding of the meaning of freedom of the press and the nature of the modern news enterprise," WAN and the news agencies said in a letter to Mike Miller, CEO and General Secretary of the International Rugby Board.

Judge to question Chirac over corruption case

PARIS—President Jacques Chirac is to be questioned after he leaves office in May by a judge looking into a corruption case dating from his time as mayor of Paris, justice officials said Thursday. The officials said no date had been set for the interview, but it could happen any time after mid-June when Chirac's presidential immunity expires. The judge's investigation is into a kickback scheme in which workers for Chirac's Rally for the Republic (RPR) party had salaries paid for by Paris city hall or companies that won contracts there. Chirac, 74, was mayor of Paris from 1977 to 1995. *AFP*

SMART Buddy endorsers Epy Quizon and Anne Curtis host the evening concert.

The Araneta Center was recently turned into a giant party zone as Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART), the country's leading wireless services provider, pulled out all the stops to reward loyal subscribers and welcome new ones with a big bash of music and freebies, via the SMART Buddy Party Central!

An outdoor show entertained the huge crowd that filled the Araneta Center parking area, and featured the most sought-after radio jocks of the moment, such as Delamar of Monster Radio RX 93.1 and Mojo Jojo of Magic 89.9. A dance showdown between participating colleges and universities, a singing competition, a variety of parlor games, and raffle draws kept the grand ball rolling all day long. SMART Buddies Dennis Trillo, Angel Locsin, and Anne Curtis also spiced up the event and excited the crowd by partying at the SMART Buddy Party Central with their fellow subscribers.

Coliseum packed to the rafters with subscribers all eager to watch local rock royalties Sandwich, 6Cyclemind, Calla Lily, Hale, Sugarfree, Itchyworms, Shamrock, and Rocksteddy. The Pinoy rock music fest was kept lively and highly entertaining by the funny antics of the host, SMART Buddy endorser Epy Quizon.

SMART Wireless Consumer Division Head Danilo J. Mojica gives his opening remarks about the whole-day event and the SMART Business Links program.

Over a hundred booths surrounded the Big Dome during the SMART Buddy Party Central, and offered fun and exciting activities such as broadband Internet access, video streaming and video calling via 3G, MMS downloads, arcade gaming, and free services like hairspa, henna and glitter tattoos, among others.

Party all through the night the SMART way

The day was capped by a gigantic concert that saw the Araneta

The highlight of the music fest was the celebration of the achievements of the SMART Biz Buddies, or the students that have partnered with SMART through the pioneering SMART Buddy Business Links program. Through the program, budding student-entrepreneurs are given the necessary training, resources, and opportunity to be retailers of SMART products and services, while earning commission from their sales and getting special incentives for exceeding their quota. At the SMART Buddy Party Central, the top 50 SMART Biz Buddies were feted onstage and awarded for their success.

The night also marked SMART's recent achievement of another industry-high milestone of 25 million subscribers.

"While SMART keeps churning out cutting-edge services and innovative features to entice new subscribers, we also continuously look for ways to reward and shower with surprises all the loyal SMART Buddy subscribers," says Danilo J. Mojica, SMART Wireless Consumer Division Head.

A whole day packed with fun activities, a gigantic concert featuring the best of the best of local bands, and free load for all SMART Buddy subscribers -- now that's one huge party only SMART can stage!

DAHIL SMART TAYO

25,000,000 STRONG.25,000,000 SMART

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

'I beheaded Daniel Pearl with my blessed right hand'

AN AIRPLANE passes behind the US Bank Tower, formerly known as the Library Tower, in downtown Los Angeles on Feb. 9, 2006. Suspected 9-11 terrorist Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's admission this past week that he planned to destroy the West Coast's tallest building comes as no surprise to LA authorities, who say it is still one of the nation's top terrorist targets. AP

WASHINGTON—THE CHIEF SUSPECT IN THE Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, confessed to beheading US journalist Daniel Pearl "with my blessed right hand," the US Defense Department said.

The confession came during a closed-door hearing last Saturday at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as Mohammed, the number three leader of the al-Qaida terror network, claimed responsibility for 31 plots around the world, including the 2001 attacks on New York and Washington.

"I decapitated with my blessed right hand the head of the American Jew, Daniel Pearl, in the city of Karachi, Pakistan," Mohammed said in a statement he wrote, which was read to the hearing by a military officer representing him.

"For those who would like to confirm, there are pictures of me on the Internet holding his head," he said.

Pearl, 38, was the South Asia bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal when he was abducted in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi on Jan. 23, 2002, while researching a story about Islamic militants.

His kidnapping triggered a massive manhunt across Pakistan, as his French wife, Mariane, who was heavily pregnant with the couple's first child, maintained an anxious vigil.

Four weeks later a graphic video showing Pearl's decapitation was delivered to the US consulate in Karachi. His remains were later found in a compound on the outskirts of the city.

Ruth and Judea Pearl, the parents of the beheaded journalist, said they were treating Mohammed's statement cautiously.

"It is impossible to know at this point whether Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's boast about killing our son has any bearing in truth," they said in a statement to AFP from their home in Encino, California.

"We prefer to focus our energy on continuing Danny's lifework through the programs of the Daniel Pearl Foundation which aim to eradicate the hatred that took his life." The Defense Department had blacked out Mohammed's claim to his personal role in Pearl's killing in the initial release Wednesday of his statement until the reporter's family had been notified, Pentagon spokesperson Bryan Whitman said.

The Pentagon released an amended transcript of the hearing on Thursday that restored the previously deleted passages about Pearl's beheading.

A suspected senior deputy to Osama bin Laden, Mohammed claimed to be the mastermind behind an array of terrorist attacks, including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 2002 bombing of a nightclub in Bali, Indonesia, according to the transcript.

Mohammed has been kept in controversial circumstances, most of the time in complete secrecy, since his capture in Pakistan in 2003. He has no access to a lawyer and allegations have been made that he was tortured while in US custody.

Human Rights Watch called Thursday for the United States to release a separate statement by Mohammed in which he claims to have been tortured while held by the CIA.

"It is a glaring misuse of the classification power for the government to classify information simply because it might be embarrassing or unlawful," Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

"Mohammed's claims of torture should be investigated rather than concealed." The White House has declined to comment on Mohammed's statements, saying it did not want to influence any legal proceedings.

In an oral statement in broken English, Mohammed, who is Pakistani, said Pearl's beheading was not an al-Qaida operation.

"It's like beheading Daniel Pearl," he said. "It's not related to al-Qaida. It was shared in Pakistani. Other group, Mujahedeen." Pearl, who was based in Bombay, had traveled to Pakistan to investigate the connections between al-Qaida and Richard Reid, a British convert to Islam who tried to detonate explosives in his shoes on a trans-Atlantic commercial flight. *AFP*

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Bucks give new coach dream debut vs Spurs** /A28

SPORTS

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

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BARRERA-MARQUEZ BRAWL

Pacquiao casts giant shadow

BARRERA: Favorite

By Roy Luarca

FINALLY, HIS BAGS ARE packed and he is ready to go.

After several postponements, Filipino ring superstar Manny Pacquiao leaves at 10 tonight to be at ringside for the Fearless card slated Saturday (Sunday morning in Manila) at the Mandalay Bay Arena in Las Vegas.

The headliner pitting Marco Antonio Barrera against fellow Mexican Juan Manuel Maquez for the WBC super featherweight crown is being billed as the year's first big fight.

Despite all the hype, however, it is evident that Pacquiao casts a giant shadow on what is expected to be a brawl for bragging rights as the best active Mexican boxer, if not the best, ever.

And rightly so.

For all the perceived combined greatness of Barrera and Marquez—who have a combined total of 77 knockouts, seven world titles and 32 years' ring experience—they still fell a tad short of Pacquiao's reputation as the year's best pound-for-pound fighter.

Both have absorbed the fury of Pacquiao's punches with devastating results.

Barrera hit the canvas for only the first and second time in his storied career en route to an 11th round TKO loss while Marquez survived three first-round knockdowns and escaped with a controversial draw.

A review of the scorecard, however, revealed that Pacquiao should have won over Marquez. One of the judges, Mark Clements of Nevada, admitted to depriving the Filipino of victory.

Clements scored the first round, 10-7, instead of the proper 10-6 as the three-knockdown rule was not in effect during the fight.

Having measured the capabilities of the Mexican warriors, Pacquiao gives Barrera the edge to prevail in the 12-round encounter.

According to Pacquiao, Barrera—who like him holds a 2-1 edge over another Mexican icon, Erik Morales, in their own trilogy—is a better puncher and ring tactician.

The 33-year-old Barrera, who is rated a 7-5 favorite by Computerbox, has said that retirement beckons and he is probably good for just one more fight.

If he gets past Marquez, also 33, Barrera would like nothing better than a return bout with Pacquiao.

The same holds true for Marquez, whose handlers blundered into turning down a megabuck offer for a rematch with Pacquiao and consequently failed to reach the popularity attained by Barrera and Morales.

No matter who emerges victor, however, Pacquiao is expected to be ready to oblige to what is sure to be another blockbuster grudge match.

But first, Pacquiao must also hurdle another Mexican, Jorge Solis, in their fight for the WBC international super featherweight title on April 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Peñalosa also aims to KO De Leon

AN OLD, BATTERED WARRIOR AGAINST a young, highly skilled assassin.

The odds are heavily stacked against Filipino Gerry Penalosa when he fights for the WBO super bantamweight title of Mexican Daniel Ponce de Leon on Saturday (Sunday morning in Manila) at the Mandalay Bay Arena in Las Vegas.

Las Vegas bookmakers have installed the 34-year-old Cebuano as an 8-1 underdog against the 26-year-old De Leon, who packs a mean wallop in both hands and owns a sterling record of 30 wins, 28 by knockout, against only one loss.

Peñalosa, a world champion from February 1997 to August 1998, believes he has the skills and experience to dethrone De Leon.

The Mexican had earlier dismissed Peñalosa as an unworthy foe and said that another Filipino, Boom Boom Bautista, could be a stronger challenger.

In an interview with Winchell Campos of the website Philboxing, Penalosa said he is also gunning for a knockout.

"I feel very good and I think this is the fight that will define my career," said Penalosa, who holds a 51-5-2 (34 KOs) record. "I have never trained harder." *Roy Luarca*

Stiff criteria for PBL team to Seaba Champions Cup

By Jasmine W. Payo

SHOOTERS WHO CAN DEFEND, BIG MEN WHO CAN RUN THE fastbreak—players ready to make great sacrifices.

These will be among the criteria in a performance appraisal for the three-day tryouts of the PBL selection to the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) Champions Cup next month in Jakarta.

Coach Junel Baculi, the Harbour Centre consultant tapped to mentor the PBL selection, said aspirants will be evaluated by four other coaches in his staff—Toyota Balintawak's Louie Alas, Harbour Centre's Jorge Gallent, Henkel Sista's Caloy Garcia and Magnolia's Koy Banal.

More than half of the 15 players who showed up on the first day of tryouts yesterday were from back-to-back champion Harbour Centre.

Among the shoo-ins in the 12-man roster is Silver Cup Most Valuable Player Jason Castro, the nifty Hapee guard who recently defected to Harbour Centre.

"It's going to be tough because of the high expectations of the fans," said Castro, a member of the RP Youth Team two years ago.

The Jakarta tournament, slated April 9 to 13, will be the Philippines' first regional stint in two years and comes after the Fiba (international basketball federation) lifted the country's ban from international competitions last month.

Other players who showed up in the tryout at the RFM gym yesterday were Harbour Centre's JC Intal, Jojo Duncil, Jonathan Fernandez, Chico Lanete, Beau Belga, Chad Alonzo and Ryan Araña.

Toyota Balintawak's Marvin Cruz, Patrick Cabahug and Erick Rodriguez, Hapee's Larry Rodriguez, and Magnolia's Jeff Chan and Al Magpayo also joined the scrimmage.

Samigue Eman, Henkel Sista's 6-foot-9 center, attended the tryout but remained at the sidelines due to a strained right calf muscle.

"It's flattering, I've never been part of any national team in the past," said Cruz, a 5-foot-8 point guard. "I hope I could make it to the RP team. My family will be very happy if I get selected."

The PBL called 24 players to join the tryouts for the Seaba club tournament that serves as a qualifier for the Fiba-Asia Champions Cup in Iran this September.

Among the no-shows were UAAP MVP Ken Bono and Doug Kramer of Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala, NCAA MVP Sam Ekwe and Yousif Aljamal of Magnolia, and Mail and More's JR Quiñahan.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad (right) leads prayers before yesterday's scrimmage presided over by coach Junel Baculi (fifth from left) at the RFM gym. RUDY ESPERAS

Rebuilding Stags eye Gallent

SAN SEBASTIAN COLLEGE HOPES TO HIRE a champion coach in a bid to reclaim lost glory in NCAA basketball.

The Stags are working to get the services of coach Jorge Gallent, who has steered Harbour Centre to back-to-back titles in the PBL.

San Sebastian sports officials said the deal remains "under negotiation" and may be finalized in the coming weeks.

Raymund Valenzona called the shots last season as a replacement for his father, longtime Stags mentor Arturo Valenzona.

The Recto-based squad had been sliding in the standings since the elder Valenzona steered the Stags to back-to-back titles in 2001 and 2002 and to five straight crowns from 1993 to 1997, the longest streak in NCAA basketball history.

Last year, the Stags finished with a 4-10 win-loss record. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Pagadian five downs returning Toyota Iloilo

STANDINGS	W	L
Tagaytay	2	0
Pagadian	2	1
Quezon	1	1
Iloilo	0	1
GenSan	0	2
Ozamiz	x	x
Valencia	x	x
Davao	x	x

ILOILO CITY—THE Pagadian Explorers gave the returning Toyota Iloilo Warriors a rude welcome by cruising to a 104-93 victory Thursday night in the 2007 NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the University of San Agustin gym here.

Forward John Villaver scattered a career-high 19 points to power the Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co to their second win in three games.

Villaver combined with the backcourt tandem of Orvil Saludsod and Eric Quilo in a torrid third-quarter run to frustrate the Warriors of the Iloilo Basketball League and businessman Robert Uy who came back from a one conference leave.

The Explorers, still without injured ex-PBA star Nelson Asaytono, unloaded 32 points while blanking the Warriors for three minutes for a 19-point advantage going into the payoff period.

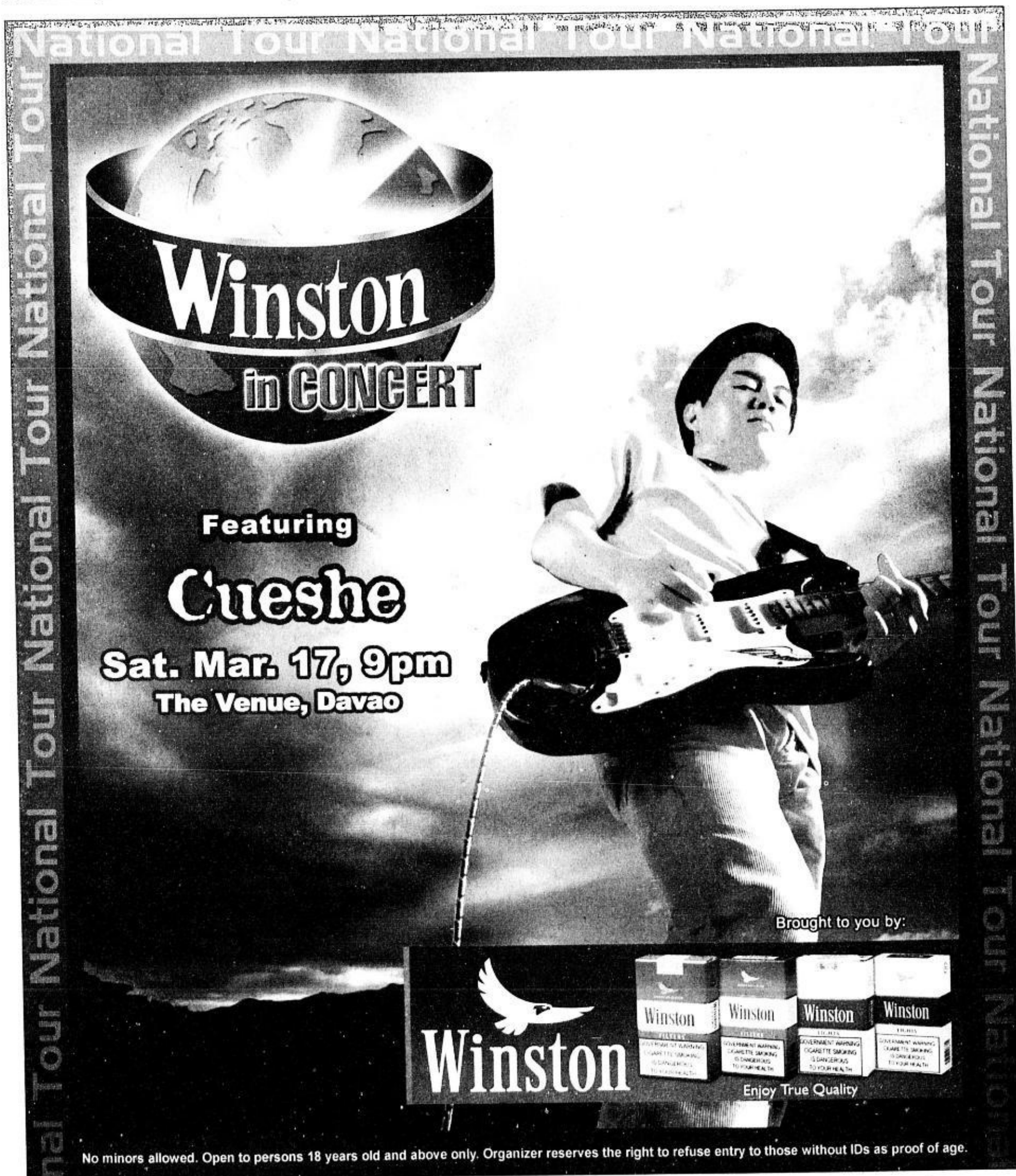
NBC action resumes on Tuesday with Quezon Villa Anita embarking on a three-game road trip in Mindanao. The NBC Game of the Week is shown on Basketball TV every Thursday.

The scores:

PAGADIAN 104—Villaver 19, Orquillas 16, Quilo 14, Mamaclay 13, Daja 13, Saludsod 8, Singedas 5, Sinco 4, Arquero 4, Huelar 4, Omandam 0, Cortez 0, Unabia 0, Pamaran 0

ILOILO 93—Baglos 22, Senieres 19, Guanco 17, Tizon 11, Leonida 7, Cortel 6, Amuan 4, Laborte 3, Sina-on 0, Poral 0.

Quarters: 25-28, 51-51, 83-64, 104-93



SPORTSWATCH

2 PBF eliminators in Carmona

THE COUNTRY'S TOP FLYWEIGHTS AND JUnior bantamweights headline the Double Main Event card put up by Carmona Mayor Roy Loyola today at the Carmona town plaza. Unbeaten Dondon Jimenea (17 wins, nine by KO) battles Jun Arlos of the Dante Almario stable in a 10-round PBF flyweight championship eliminator while former RP flyweight champion Edgar Rodrigo goes up against Richard Olisa, also over 10 rounds, in a junior bantamweight PBF championship eliminator. The fight card's first fight starts at 6 p.m. The fights, promoted in cooperation with Jun Sarreal, coincide with the town's fiesta. In supporting bouts, Dexter Mendoza battles Armando Casa (118 lb) in an eight-rounder, Lobert Bayo fights Eduardo Buenaventura (110 lb) and Dindo Campo clashes with Cris Dollesin (118 lb).

Mild Seven F1 show Sunday

THE SEASON OPENER OF FORMULA ONE RACing, the Australian Grand Prix, will be shown "live" this Sunday at the Speedzone in Fort Bonifacio Global City. The show, presented by Mild Seven in cooperation with MP Turbo F1 Club, starts at 10 a.m. Admission is free.

85 fights up in LPC 5-cocker

MULTITITLED PATRICK ANTONIO HEADS THE powerhouse cast of entries seeing action in today's 85-fight Summer Bigtime 5-Cock Derby at the Las Piñas Coliseum. Host Ricky Valencia of the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) enjoys the backing of Mayor Nene Aguilar and Gerry Ramos for the derby. Antonio, who is on a roll with five championships in national and international derbies since January, faces equally tough foes in Bebot Uy, Jack Yap, Tonton Uy, Lito Orillaza and Rodolfo Pineda, Gov. Ito Ynares and Pol Estrellado, among others.

Bullstag derby at Pasay today

MORE THAN 70 FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN THE NFGB National 8-Bullstag Derby starting at 6 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit. The derby, sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, stakes a guaranteed prize of P3 million for an entry fee of P15,000. Pit manager Eric dela Rosa said today's elimination round is open to all cockers and breeders affiliated with the 24-organization National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders (NFGB). The group staged the National Bakbakan 9-Stag Derby last year which lured 1,273 entries.

Cebu Cherifer caging fires off

CEBU CITY—YOUNG VISAYAS DRIBBLERS TAKE center stage starting today when Don Bosco School hosts the 2007 Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament in Barangay Punta Princesa here.

Don Bosco Technology Center, Sacred Heart School Jesuits, Consolacion Central School and San Carlos North Campus are the pre-tournament favorites in the 5-on-5 tournament for boys 12 years old and younger.

According to project director Britt Reroma, also the assistant coach of the San Beda high school squad, the Adidas-supported event drew teams from 20 schools, including Don Bosco Lawaan, University of Southern Philippines and University of San Jose Recoletos.

Philippine Christian Gospel School and Paref Springdale are also vying along with Royal Oaks School and Talamban Elementary School in the first-ever Cherifer hoopfest to be organized in this city.

In the recent Baguio leg, Mikey Lopez and Keith Sembrano powered Berkeley School past Our Lady of Mount Carmel Montessori, 15-9, to top the event's North Luzon tournament at the Eastern College gym. Lopez and Sembrano scored 6 points apiece to spearhead the international school's victory.

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Not all 282 medalists might make it to Thailand Games

By June Navarro

NOT ALL THE 282 GOLD AND SILVER medalists in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games who passed the initial criteria set by the SEAG Task Force might make it when the Philippine Olympic Committee submits the final roster of athletes next month.

POC deputy secretary general Mark Joseph said the athletes would go under the microscope to determine if they are fit to compete in this year's SEA Games in Thailand.

"We should identify the athletes not later than April," said Joseph. "We need to finalize the number so the budget could be set aside."

Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez projected that P50 million would be spent for the country's SEA Games defense of the overall crown in the competition to be held at the end of the year in three key cities in Thailand.

Joseph said that the POC would like to know the status of the 282 athletes through their respective national sports associations to determine the bulk of the delegation as soon as possible.

"Some of these athletes might not be active anymore," he said. "We want to know their status while the NSAs come up with other selections outside the medalists to fill up the rest of the delegation."

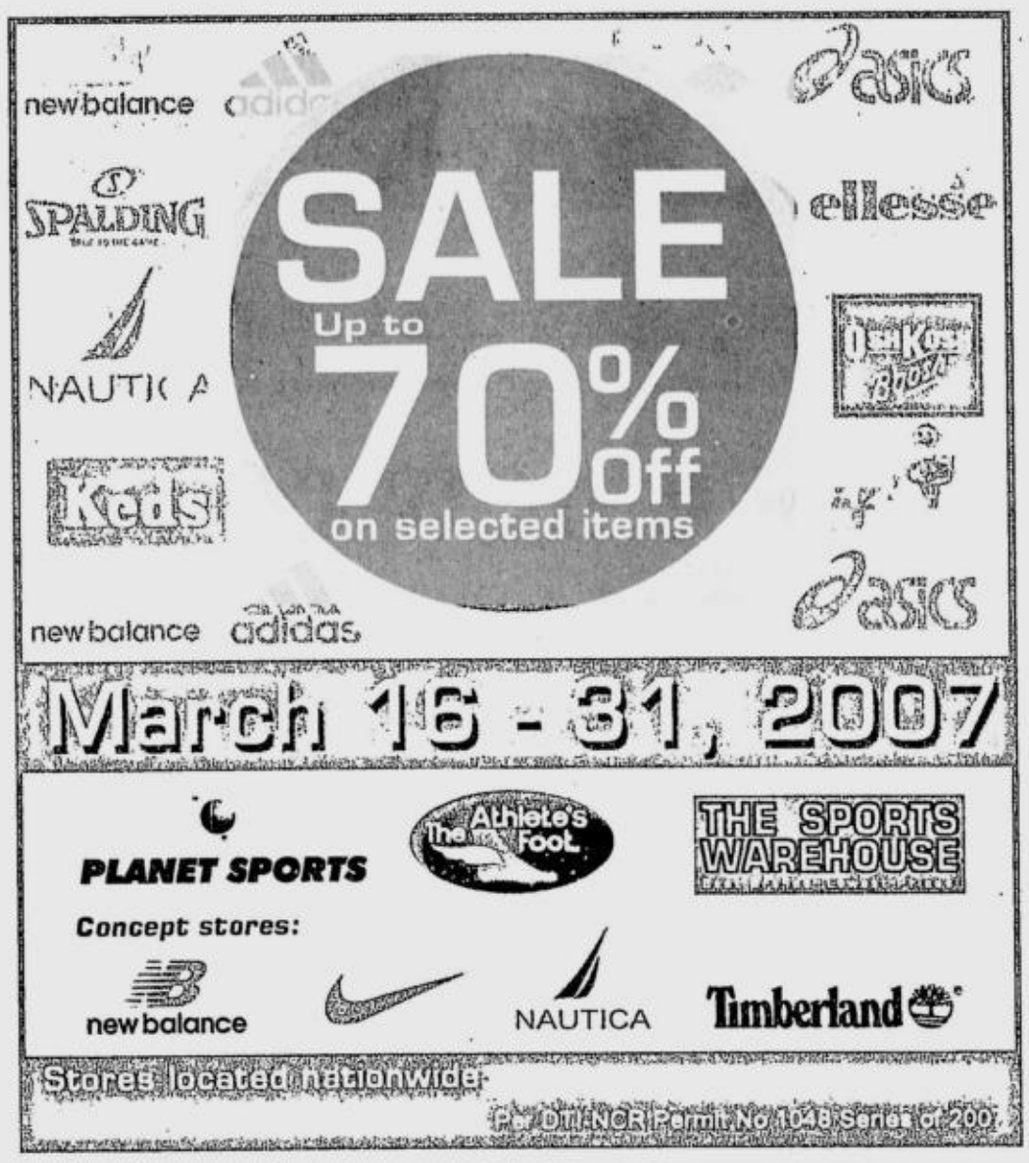
Joseph, also the chief of the national swimming association, said the POC has given the NSAs two months to submit their training requirements and the equipment needed for the preparation, among others.

The task force, made up of ranking officials from the PSC and POC, is looking at a huge contingent of at least 400 athletes and officials in the SEAG. The Philippines is vying in 38 disciplines.

With 40 sports and 43 disciplines, the Thailand SEAG is offering 441 gold medals.

"It's a wish but it may not happen," said PSC Commissioner Joey Mundo, a member of the task force, referring to the projected size of the RP delegation. "We must be realistic with the finances available as reference."

The task force will also try to lobby for the inclusion of squash, gymnastics, bodybuilding and additional events for wushu and traditional boat race, among others, when the SEAG Federation convenes next month.



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Roddick, Nadal set showdown

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—ANDY RODDICK beat Ivan Ljubicic, 7-6 (7), 7-6 (8), Thursday night to move into the Pacific Life Open semifinals. No. 3 Roddick will face No. 2 Rafael Nadal, a 7-5, 7-5 winner over Juan Ignacio Chela, on Saturday. The men's final is Sunday. On the women's side, 2004 US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova advanced to the semifinals with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Nicole Vaidisova. Kuznetsova will face Sybille Bammer, who defeated Tatiana Golovin, 6-2, 6-3. The women's championship match is Saturday. Roddick and Ljubicic, both big servers with powerful groundstrokes, nearly matched each other shot for shot. There were no service breaks, and the tiebreakers were similarly tight. *AP*

Best round puts Tiger on top

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—TIGER WOODS SHOT A 6-under 64 Thursday—his best round this season—and shared the first round lead at the Arnold Palmer Invitational with Vaughn Taylor and Paul Casey. Woods played his best golf in nearly six months. He opened with four birdies in the first six holes, missing putts of 10 and 12 feet on the other two. The 64 was the lowest opening round at the Bay Hill Club course since Woods shot 64 in 1998. Taylor played bogey-free, picking up birdies on two of the toughest holes, including a 5-iron over the water to 8 feet on the eighth hole. *AP*

SMUSH Parker (right) of the Los Angeles Lakers knocks the ball away from Allen Iverson of the Denver Nuggets. AFP

Bucks give new coach dream debut vs Spurs

NEW YORK—LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK enjoyed a dream debut as Milwaukee Bucks coach on Thursday, his team ending the San Antonio Spurs' 13-game winning streak with a 101-90 home victory.

Michael Redd scored 29 points to help an inspired Bucks notch a first-game win for their former assistant, who was promoted to head coach after Terry Stotts was fired on Wednesday.

"I anticipated our guys playing hard," Krystkowiak told reporters after Milwaukee shot 53 percent to end San Antonio's third-longest winning steak in franchise history. "There were a lot of positive things for us tonight."

The Bucks grabbed a 52-43 halftime lead and got some key contributions from their bench players to hold off the Spurs down the stretch, especially the seldom-used Lynn Greer.

The rookie has been inactive for most of the season, but he contributed a career-high 14 points, all in the fourth quarter, after starting guard Mo Williams was ejected.

"It was a lot of fun, I'm glad I made the most of it (the chance to play)," Greer said.

Williams was assessed a pair of technical fouls and was ejected midway through the third quarter and had to be restrained from going after officials.

Udonis Haslem had 21 points and 12 rebounds as the Miami Heat won its eighth straight game over the New Jersey Nets. The Heat are 9-2 since Dwyane Wade went down with a shoulder injury.

The Los Angeles Lakers lost their seventh straight game for the first time in the coaching career of Phil Jackson, dropping a 113-86 decision to the Denver Nuggets. Reuters

GAME TODAY (*Basketball TV*)
7:30 a.m.—Sacramento vs Miami
(replays @ 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.)

Powerhouse Korean ladies top favorites in Sirikit Cup

WITH A SQUAD BACKSTOPPED BY THE SAME youngster who powered her country to a golden double in the Doha Asian Games, South Korea is the prohibitive favorite to lift the Queen Sirikit Cup again in the Asia-Pacific Ladies Invitational Golf Team Championship on March 21-23 at The Country Club in Laguna.

Teener So Yeon-ryu, who also finished seventh in the World Amateurs last year, underscores the Koreans' status as a world power in ladies golf.

Meanwhile, the 13 foreign teams are scheduled to arrive today and tomorrow.

The Koreans will plane in this weekend along with teams from Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, China, India, Indonesia and defending champion New Zealand.

The Philippines will be represented by Dottie Ardina, Regina de Guzman and Crystal Superal. They make up the youngest-ever RP trio in the Sirikit Cup.

Gina Tuason, president of the organizing Women's Golf Association of the Philippines, said that the Filipinos' familiarity with the course bodes well for the RP bid this year.

"They play at TCC almost every day, so we expect them to be well-prepared for the tournament," she said.

Ardina and Superal are both members of the ICTSI training pool, which calls The Country Club its home course, while De Guzman is also well acquainted with the conditions at the super exclusive layout.

Philippine Ladies Open champ Yupaporn Kawinpakorn is coming to boost Thailand's bid in the tournament.

Amurao beats up ex-boxer for FFC crown

WUSHU ARTIST JOEL AMURAO DOMINATED boxer Jovan Presbeterio to capture the featherweight crown via a first round victory in the Fearless Fighting Championship (FFC) before a huge crowd at the Metrowalk complex in Ortigas, Pasig recently.

Amurao worked on the former national team mainstay early then went on to fashion out a Rear Naked Choke triumph right in the opening round of the scheduled five-rounder, the featured match in the blockbuster fight card presented by Ace Technologies.

SEA Games wushu gold medalist Mark Sangiao also defeated Eric Cepeda via a Referees Stoppage (strikes) in the second round.

Also hurdling their rivals in the event organized by FFC, headed by president Alex Lopez, were top contender Bernard Dumar, who scored a unanimous decision (second round) win over Celso Gunda; and Edward Kelly, another No. 1 contender, who downed Arie Zarco in a Referee Stoppage (due to cut) contest.

The event was staged to generate public awareness and at the same time promote mixed martial arts as a sport where Filipino fighters can excel in the international arena.

Varsity rivals collide anew in Ang Liga

GAMES TOMORROW (*UST Field*)
2 p.m.—Santo Tomas vs Far Eastern
4 p.m.—Candidates vs Sphere

JUST OVER A WEEK AFTER THEY LAST clashed, fierce varsity rivals Far Eastern and Santo Tomas take on each other again tomorrow in the PFF Ang Liga Pilipina football tournament at the UST football field.

In their first-round match last weekend, the FEU booters of coach Malou Rubio asserted their mastery of the UST crew with a 1-0 decision courtesy of an 83rd-minute strike by Farrabeth Limbo.

The hosts, who were dethroned by the Lady Tamaraws in the UAAP women's tournament, are eager to get back at their tormentors when they tangle at 2 p.m. in the event sponsored by Mizuno.

A win would pull UST into a tie for second with FEU on similar 7-2 win-loss marks, behind frontrunning Candidates (9-1), which plays Sphere (7-4) at 4 p.m.

Under the revised format of the event, also backed by the Marikina City government of Mayor Marides Fernando, the top two teams after the two-round eliminations will slug it out for the championship.

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2-month budget gap at a low ₱18.6B

Surplus posted in February due to PLDT sale

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT POSTED A RARE budget surplus of P11.1 billion in February due to huge privatization proceeds and controlled spending, resulting in a lower-than-programmed fiscal deficit of P18.6 billion for the first two months of the year.

In a briefing yesterday, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the January-February cumulative deficit was P21.8 billion lower than the P40.4-billion shortfall in the same period last year and represented only 40 percent of the first-quarter deficit ceiling of P45.8 billion.

"Given this performance, we are on track with our full-year deficit target of P63 billion," Teves said.

Total revenues for the two-month period went up by 18.5 percent to P162.3 billion, shored up by the P25.2 billion in proceeds from the sale of the government's indirect stake in telecommunications giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (through Philippine Telecommunication Investment Corp.) on Feb. 28.

The sale helped the government reverse the cash budget position in the month of February to a surplus of P11.1 billion from a deficit of P24.9 billion a year ago. Revenues for the month also grew by 39 percent to P89.6 billion from February last year.

On the other hand, total expenditures for January to February expanded at a slower pace of 2 percent to P180.9 billion, despite the programmed front-loading of expenditures for the first quarter ahead of the 45-day election ban on approving infrastructure projects as well as to take advantage of weather conditions favorable to construction activities.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. also said the government was on track with its spending limits, adding that the government would continue rationalization programs down to the agency level but could not quantify how much savings would be generated this year.

Netting out the interest payments on the expenditure side, the national government recorded a primary surplus of P37.5 billion for February alone and P40.2 billion for the two-month period.

From January to February, the government generated P3.7 billion in savings due to lower interest rates, the peso appreciation and initiatives to buyback bonds.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz noted that while collections by the Bureau of Internal Revenue were flat, there was a slight contraction in the revenues generated by the Bureau of Customs.

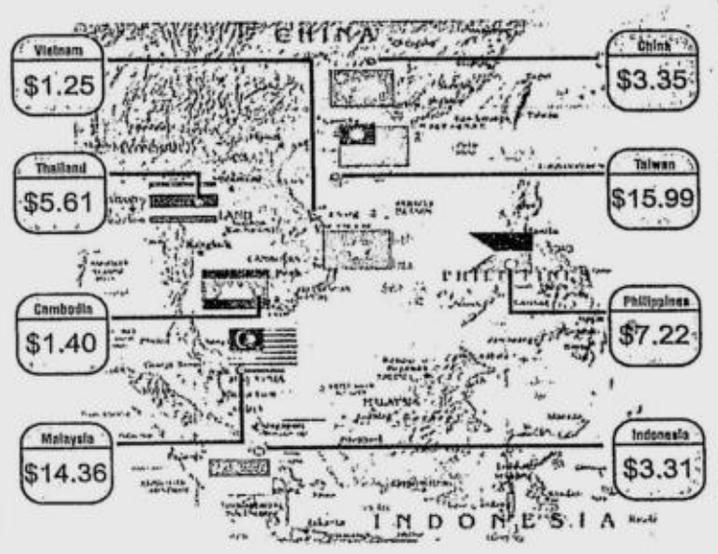
For the two-month period, the BIR collected P91 billion, compared with P91.2 billion in the same period last year, while BOC raised P25.2 billion, or 1.5 percent lower than the P25.6 billion a year ago.

Teves reiterated that he would wait until the end of June to determine whether there was a need to seek new tax measures from Congress. He added that the government was intensifying revenue administration efforts to boost recurring revenues.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

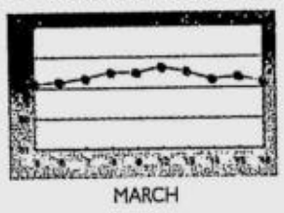
Comparative wages in selected Asian countries (in US $)



Source: National Wages and Productivity Commission
Kate Pedroso Inquirer Research

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



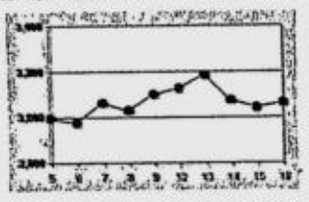
MARCH

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 48.85 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 16, 2007

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

JANUARY-FEBRUARY

BOP surplus hits $1.28B

STRONG FOREIGN EXCHANGE INflows allowed the Philippines to post a balance-of-payments surplus of $554 million in February, bringing the surplus for the first two months to $1.28 billion, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

The February surplus was smaller than the $731 million recorded in January, when the government raised $1 billion from the sale of new bonds in the global market.

The two-month surplus of $1.28 billion was also lower than the $2.03 billion posted in the same period last year as the government's offshore borrowings were larger then.

Early last year, the Philippine government took advantage of improved investor confidence by selling a total of $2 billion in dollar- and euro-denominated bonds.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the BOP surplus for the first two months was "the result of significant increases in exports, overseas Filipino workers remittances, foreign portfolio investments and sustained investment income of the BSP."

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the local economy and the rest of the world. Any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident like importation or debt servicing is a deficit item in the BOP while any which gives rise to a receipt like borrowing, exporting or inward remittance is a surplus item.

Based on the latest government data, for instance, the country's export earnings grew at their strongest pace in seven years at 27.3 percent in January over a year ago as higher demand for electronics jacked up the total value of goods sold abroad to $4.17 billion.

The country also chalked up $665 million in net foreign portfolio inflows or "hot money" in the first two months of the year, 58-percent higher than the windfall in the same period last year, due to the resurgence of global investor confidence on Asian emerging markets.

But the Philippines' biggest source of dollar inflows was the large pool of overseas workers whose monthly remittances have breached $1 billion for the last nine months ending January 2007. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Sale of gov't stake in Meralco seen in 2nd half

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THREE state-owned financial institutions have agreed to sell up to a 33-percent combined stake in power distributor Manila Electric Co. in the second semester as part of the state's privatization program.

The national government alone owns 10 percent of Meralco while another 23 percent is held by the Social Security System, the Government Service Insurance System and Land Bank of the Philippines.

"We've already agreed to sell as a block but the details of that will have to be worked out," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told reporters yesterday.

Based on Meralco's estimated market capitalization, Teves said the national government could raise about P5 billion from its 10-percent stake.

SALE/ B2

Shares close 0.61% higher

SHARE PRICES closed 0.61 percent higher yesterday on bargain hunting after a two-day slide, dealers said.

Investors were also encouraged by the government's better fiscal performance in the first two months of the year but thin turnover indicated many remained cautious after the recent volatility on global markets.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite .index rose 18.64 points at 3,062.25 after trading between 3,043.61 and 3,066.13. The index was down 1.2 percent for the week.

The broader all-share index rose 6.86 points or 0.35 percent to 1,980.45.

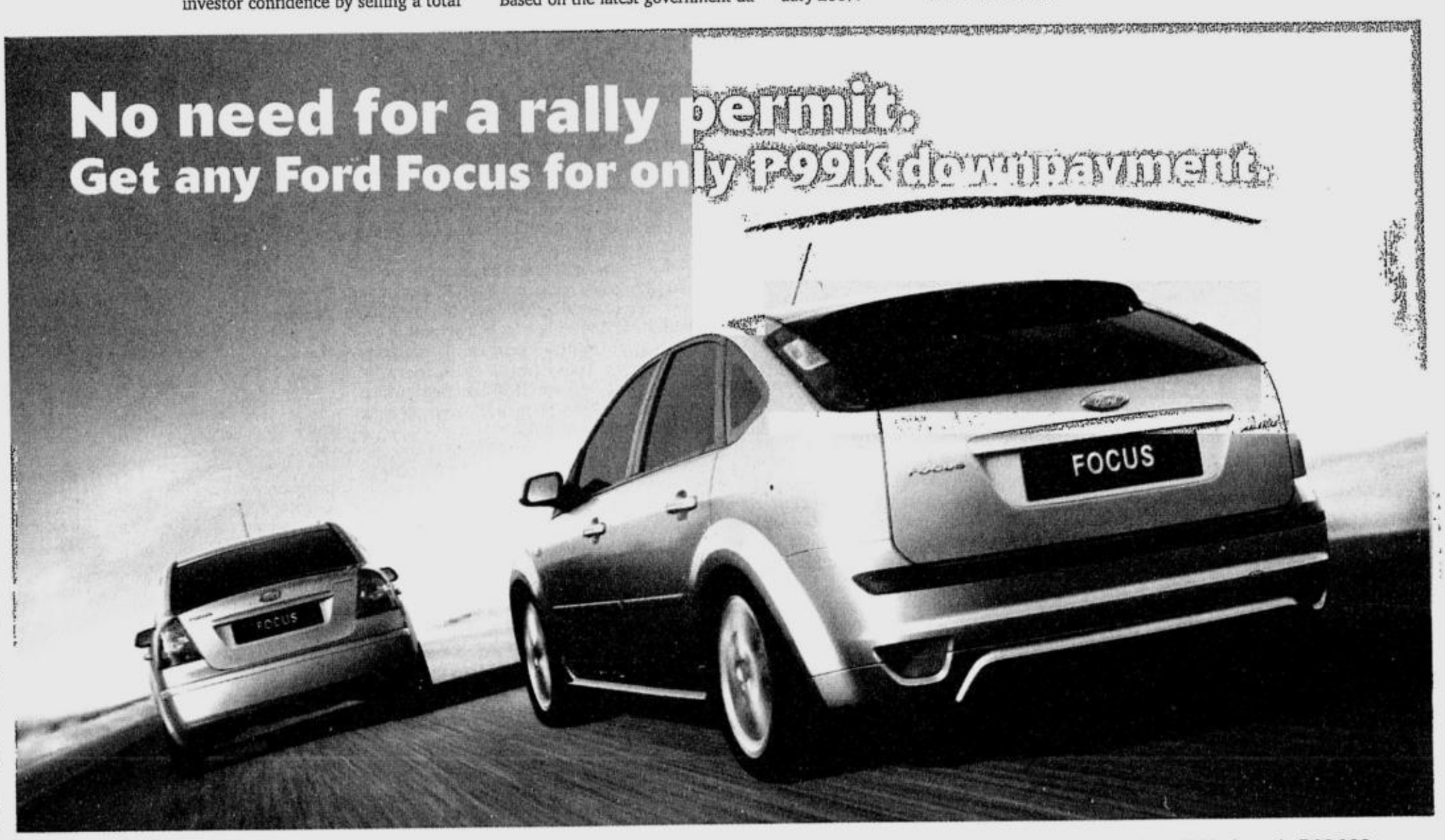
Gainers led losers 60 to 34, with 60 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 2.8 billion shares worth P1.8 billion, compared to 2.7 billion shares worth P2.4 billion on Thursday.

Shortly before the market opened, the government said it incurred a budget deficit of P18.6 billion in the first two months of the year, less than half of the P40.4-billion deficit recorded in the same period last year.

"The smaller budget deficit for the first two months of the year is good news for the market and ... means less crowding-

SHARES/ B2



Banks' soured loans up in Jan.

Lending to real estate sector improved by 4%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE NON-PERFORMING LOANS OF COMmercial banks inched up to 5.72 percent of their total portfolio as of end-January from 5.66 percent in December, as the growth in bad loans outpaced the expansion of their total lending.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas also said the sector's total exposure to the rebounding real estate sector picked up by 3.9 percent to hit P223.3 billion in December from a quarter ago, reflecting the improving investor confidence in the property sector.

In the meantime, the comparative NPL ratio for end-December was brought down by the BSP from the earlier reported figure of 6.1 percent due to the late reporting of a major asset disposal transaction.

Although the end-January NPL ratio was higher than the revised figure a month ago, the BSP said this was still an improvement from 8.14 percent a year ago.

The month-on-month increase in the ratio of soured loans was due to the 1.36-percent rise in total NPLs, outpacing the meager 0.3 percent rise in total loan portfolio.

The ratio of restructured loans to total portfolio slightly eased to 3.79 percent from the previous month's 3.82 percent. Out of these restructured loans, 42.33 percent had fallen past due anew.

The latest NPL ratio, combined with real and other properties owned and acquired (ropoa), brought up the total non-performing asset (NPA) ratio of 6.29 percent, slightly higher than the previous month's 6.28 percent.

In peso terms, the banking sector's stock of bad loans amounted to P119 billion out of a total portfolio of P2.07 trillion. Its ropoa, net of loan loss provisions reached P154.57 billion. The sector's gross assets as of end-January hit P4.42 trillion.

Total reserves for all bad asset amounted to P111.17 billion, of which provisions for bad loans amounted to P95.68 billion.

In the meantime, the quarterly rise in commercial banks' real estate exposure was spurred by a 3.3-percent growth in real estate loans worth P6.5 billion in the fourth quarter. Investments in securities held by real estate companies also increased by P1.9 billion.

The peso value of all real estate loans granted by commercial banks reached P202.16 billion at end-December, up from P191.18 billion a year ago. Including commercial papers and equity investments in the property sector, the total exposure was worth P223.28 billion.

Deal seen lowering OFW remittances fees

PHILIPPINE POSTAL SAVINGS BANK, BEing groomed as a state bank for overseas Filipino workers, yesterday inked an agreement with peers from 16 other countries to map out global remittance corridors, as well as lower fees and charges for migrant workers.

In a briefing yesterday, Postalbank president Rolando Macasaet also said the bank would raise P1.1 billion to P2 billion within the year to beef up its financial muscle through an offering of subordinated debt which will qualify as tier 2 or supplementary capital.

The tier 2 issuance would fund the bank's infrastructure building efforts without diluting the shares of its shareholders. Postalbank is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Philippine Postal Corp.

Macasaet said the tie-up with foreign savings banks, which are all members of the World Savings Bank Institute (WSBI), would allow Postalbank to offer remittance services to OFWs at a much lower price than current levels.

"Because of this (WSBI) network, we don't have to spend a lot to open offices abroad," Macasaet said, noting that the bank would also use the extensive offshore presence of its parent company Postal Corp. to reach out to OFWs.

He said Postalbank would boost its operations on its own after a proposed assistance deal with fellow state-owned lenders Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines fizzled out.

The original plan was to consolidate the remittance operations of LandBank and DBP into Postalbank and/or infuse fresh capital into Postalbank to raise its capitalization by P1 billion.

Today, Postalbank has 20 branches nationwide catering to the banking and financing needs of communities, entrepreneurs, households and individuals. Its vision is "to touch the lives of more Filipinos through an extensive branch expansion program and to fulfill the mandate of the national government to be the bank for OFWs by setting up the needed infrastructure and linkages toward a more efficient and cost-effective remittance service."

At the regional group meeting of the Asian members of WSBI, representatives from 17 countries including the Philippines had committed to pay attention to the impact of migration as a key driver of local economic development and business growth.

Doris C. Dumlao

Vulcan Industrial to raise ₱600M for investments, debt repayment

By Daxim L. Lucas

PUBLICLY LISTED VULCAN INDUSTRIAL AND Mining Corp. plans to raise as much as P600 million by selling new shares to a third party to finance the firm's investments and debt repayment program.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Vulcan said the funds will be raised through a 1:1 equity private placement to Anglo Philippine Holdings Corp., a holding firm with interests in real estate, infrastructure and energy projects.

Vulcan and Anglo are linked by a common shareholder—Alfredo C. Ramos—who also has equity stakes in various other mining firms.

Vulcan told the exchange that the proceeds of the private placement will be used over a five-year period.

During the first year, a total of P123.5 million would be spent, with the biggest share of the pie going to the repayment of debt and advances. A total of P190.6 million would be spent during the second year, spread almost evenly between debt repayment and investments, while P285.9 million would be allocated for the third to fifth years, almost exclusively for investments.

All told, P363.4 million of the new funds—over half—would be allocated for new investments and projects, while P144.2 million would be set aside for debt repayment.

Vulcan told the exchange that 600 million in new shares will be issued for the transaction at P1 each, with 25 percent immediately being due for payment by the investor, while the balance may be "called" by the firm's board of directors at an unspecified date.

After the transaction, Anglo will hold a slim majority stake in Vulcan with a total of 50.31 percent of total shares outstanding.

Anglo is involved in commercial property development, among others. It maintains a 15.79-percent stake in North Triangle Depot Commercial Corp. which owns development rights over the North Triangle depot of the MRT Project.

Anglo also maintains an 18.6-percent equity stake in Metro Rail Transit Holdings, Inc., which owns 84.9 percent of Metro Rail Transit Corp. and Metro Rail Transit Holdings II.

Sun Life pre-need sales rose 113%

THE LOCAL UNIT OF CANADIAN INSURER Sun Life Financial has emerged the market leader for pre-need plans.

In a statement, Sun Life said its initial collections for 2006 reached P762 million.

This figure, which was based on data compiled by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), represents a 113-percent increase from the previous year's level, and was enough to catapult Sun Life to the top of the pre-need industry's ranking in terms of initial cash brought (ICBI).

ICBI represents initial collections made on plans sold, based on which, sales in the pre-need industry are generally measured.

Sun Life first reported the highest ICBI share on a month-on-month basis in November 2005, and managed to close that year ranking third overall, behind Prudential Plans and Philam Plans.

"With a strong marketing strategy boosting customer sales, the company was able to sustain its leadership and jump to overall number one in year-to-date ICBI covering January to December 2006," the company said in its statement.

According to SEC data, the company's 2006 performance gave it a market share of 30.6 percent in terms of ICBI, followed by Prudential with 21.5 percent and Philam with 14.8 percent.

The report also showed that total initial collection of the country's pre-need firms increased by 9.5 percent from year-ago level. Excluding Sun Life's contribution, the 2006 initial collection would have actually decreased by 9.9 percent.

"We have sustained the momentum in our pre-need business and we finally reached the top in terms of initial collections which is an important benchmark sales indicator for pre-need companies," Sun Life Philippines president and CEO Henry Joseph Herrera said. "Topping the industry in ICBI is enough to prove the continuing trust and confidence that our target publics have given us all these years."

Sun Life executive vice president and pre-need business head Riza Mantaring said the firm "will continue to explore other target groups like the OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) and the broad 'C' markets where pre-need will be highly accessible to further increase market share."

"Also, we will design new products to cater to their changing needs," Mantaring said.

Sun Life Financial Plans Inc. is a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies, an international financial services organization providing a range of wealth accumulation and protection products and services to individual and corporate customers. Daxim L. Lucas

HGC posted big gains in '06

HOME GUARANTY CORP. RECENTLY REported major gains in 2006 marked by significant growth in its guarantee business, increased revenues and the wider participation of the financial sector in the government's housing programs.

HGC president Gonzalo Benjamin Bongolan said the agency registered P446.50 million in operating revenue in 2006, eclipsing the 2005 level of P317.50 million by 27.3 percent.

Bongolan said the increase in operating revenue was boosted by a 19.5-percent increase in guarantee fees last year which reached the P344.31 million level, up from P249.24 million in 2005.

HGC also generated P226 million in income from operations, up by 14.83 percent from the 2005 level of P196.9 million.

The HGC guarantees the exposure of both the government and private sectors in housing programs. Bongolan noted that the agency's guarantee business reached an all time high of P63.57 billion in 2006, up by 146 percent from P25.81 billion in 2000.

This, he said, was an indication of the steady rise in home lending over the past six years, and a reflection of the financial institutions' confidence in the capability of the government to protect their exposure.

Shares close . . .

From page B1

out pressure on interest rates," said Jose Vistan at AB Capital Securities.

"It gives us an assurance that borrowing costs will remain low," said Vistan, who expected the news to support follow-through buying on Monday.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. rose P25 to P2,285, rebounding from recent losses.

"PLDT was downgraded by most of the major brokerage houses after it reported disappointing results (for 2006) and gave a weak outlook for this year. But its declaration of a final dividend of P50 per share early this month supported the stock," Vistan said.

Macquarie Research retained its "outperform" recommendation on the stock, despite the mixed set of results for the past year.

"The stock has been under pressure in recent weeks, in line with the volatility in the global markets. In our view, the current weakness in the share price is an excellent opportunity (to buy)," the brokerage said in a note to clients.

PLDT shares have fallen 10.4 percent since the start of the year.

Other advancers were Globe Telecom Inc., which jumped P35 to P1,350, and Bank of the Philippines Islands, up 50 centavos at P64.50.

Food and beverage firm San Miguel Corp.'s A-shares advanced 50 centavos to P62.50 and its B-shares also rose 50 centavos to P72. *AFP*

Sale of gov't . . .

From page B1

"You have a better position or bargaining block as a group," Teves said.

Banking sources said a lot of investment banks had submitted a proposal to advise the government on the Meralco privatization and that the government would soon bid out the mandate.

These nonrecurring proceeds are expected to help beef up the government's revenues.

Teves said the government would also want to sell its interest in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. but because of existing legal disputes on ownership, he said it would not be as easy to come up with a formula for SMC.

"All things considered, it's relatively easier to sell Meralco than SMC," Teves said.

Joseph Roxas, president of local stock brokerage Eagle Equities Inc., said the government should consider selling the stock through a public offering to boost the trading liquidity of the publicly listed Meralco.

He estimated that bulk of the shares held by the government and other GFIs consisted of "A" shares or those which could only be owned by local investors.

Roxas said the sale should be structured in such a way that the distinction between Meralco "A" and "B" (those which can be bought by anyone, whether foreign or local) would be removed, boosting trading liquidity.

"I think the government can take advantage of the good market," Roxas said, noting that investor appetite for Meralco was favorable as its problems on tariff adjustment had been resolved.

Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 15, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Aslatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.5	93,500
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	56	57.5	56	57	662,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	64.5	66.5	64.5	64.5	619,400
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.52	5,610,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	100	100	100	100	19,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59	59	58	58	748,200
Philippine National Bank	47	47	46.5	46.5	35,800
Phil. Savings Bank	61	63	61	63	2,500
Security Bank Corp.	74.5	74.5	74.5	74.5	2,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	58	58	57.5	57.5	136,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	100,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	246,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	3,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1580	1580	1580	1580	500
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	106,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	675	675	630	635	6,640
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2100	2090	2090	1,220
Ivantage Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.52	1.52	601,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
Pnoc Energy Dev. Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	16,853,000
First Gen Corp.	52.5	52.5	52.5	52.5	15,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	70.5	70.5	70	70	20,300
Manila Electric Co. A	69.5	69.5	69	69.5	67,200
Manila Electric Co. B	69.5	69.5	69	69	197,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.9	9	8.9	8.9	2,699,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	3,943,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	2,420,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	2,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.36	616,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.7	3.55	3.7	28,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	12,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	52.5	53	52.5	52.5	107,000
RFM Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	215,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	203,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62	62.5	61.5	62.5	96,500
San Miguel Corp. B	71.5	73	71.5	72	65,800
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.34	2.34	2.26	2.26	6,575,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.5	363,200
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.68	4,705,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.45	4.5	4.4	4.5	1,500,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	1,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	3,959,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	139,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.85	396,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	50,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.34	15,230,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	82,900,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	26,000,000
Ayala Corp.	555	560	550	555	53,340
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	40,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8.1	8	8.1	411,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.8	7	6.6	6.7	3,360,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.07	0.0775	0.07	0.0725	158,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	72,000
APC Group Inc.	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	21,960,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	33,900,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.48	1.64	1.48	1.62	19,699,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.6	1.56	1.6	12,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	7,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.65	4.65	4.5	4.6	134,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	117,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.35	34,799,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	825,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.9	4.9	429,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	230,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.5	609,000
Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	168,000
Keppel Holdings B	2	2	2	2	10,000
Medco Holdings	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	310,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	8	8.4	8	8.2	1,822,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.72	1.74	1.68	1.68	167,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.27	0.28	9,000,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	120,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.205	16,770,000
SM Investments Corp.	352.5	355	350	350	110,660
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16	16	15.75	15.75	838,300
Belle Corp.	1.34	1.38	1.34	1.38	6,271,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.2	1.22	1.2	1.22	104,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.7	3.7	6,353,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.48	2.55	2.46	2.46	365,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	90,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.205	0.22	0.205	0.22	110,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.76	5,680,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0725	0.0775	0.07	0.0775	41,900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.64	1.66	14,600,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.25	0.27	1,940,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.26	0.27	0.25	0.26	1,320,000
Interport Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	13,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	12,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	1,150,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.81	0.82	0.81	0.81	2,020,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.05	3.05	3	3.05	9,585,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.4	4.45	138,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.93	0.94	0.86	0.86	23,950,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19	19	18.25	18.5	6,914,400
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.61	1,750,000
SM Development Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	850,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11	11	10.75	11	3,364,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.68	0.7	0.68	0.7	610,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.205	0.18	0.205	112,330,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24	24.75	24	24.75	340,300
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.7	1.7	5,301,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1330	1375	1320	1350	25,400
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.6	1,786,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2250	2285	2250	2285	114,830
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	4,190,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	57,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.3	2.32	2.3	2.32	51,000
IPVG Corp.	5.6	6	5.6	5.9	3,029,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	10,800,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.18	2.2	2.18	2.18	51,000
Philweb Corp.	0.045	0.047	0.045	0.046	99,400,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.2	4.25	4.2	4.25	155,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	52,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	28.5	29	28	29	1,494,900
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.08	1.2	1.08	1.16	635,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	12,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.3	3.6	3.25	3.6	5,133,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	11,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.92	0.95	0.92	0.93	1,470,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	22,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.55	2.6	324,000
Paxys Inc.	25.5	25.5	25	25.5	417,600
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	4.95	5	4.95	5	682,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5	5.1	5	5.1	20,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	160,600,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.6	9.8	9.6	9.8	5,695,000
Benguet Corp. A	11	11	11	11	80,300
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.4	1.44	1.38	1.42	93,273,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	2,300,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	200,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.027	37,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.032	0.033	0.031	0.033	159,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	1,063,400,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.25	4.25	6,579,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	19.5	20	19.5	20	541,700
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.71	0.74	0.7	0.74	1,900,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.16	1.26	1.16	1.24	17,866,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.46	0.5	0.46	0.49	49,690,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	59,600,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	63,800,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	157,800,000

CURRENCIES

March 16, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.755458	1.000000	48.6450
Japan	Yen	0.006426	0.008506	0.4138
United Kingdom	Pound	1.463323	1.937000	94.2254
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096716	0.128023	6.2277
Switzerland	Franc	0.620499	0.821355	39.9548
Canada	Dollar	0.642178	0.850051	41.3507
Singapore	Dollar	0.492829	0.652358	31.7340
Australia	Dollar	0.595599	0.788395	38.3515
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.004027	2.652731	129.0421
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201531	0.266766	12.9768
Brunei	Dollar	0.491227	0.650237	31.6308
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000108	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023032	0.030488	1.4831
UAE	Dirham	0.205746	0.272346	13.2483
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.323700	64.3914
Korea	Won	0.000800	0.001059	0.0515
China	Yuan**	0.097554	0.129132	6.2816
Argentina	Peso	0.244090	0.323102	15.7173
Brazil	Real	0.361636	0.478698	23.2863
Denmark	Kroner	0.134234	0.177686	8.6435
India	Rupee	0.017138	0.022686	1.1036
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215139	0.284779	13.8531
Mexico	New Peso	0.067769	0.089706	4.3637
New Zealand	Dollar	0.525134	0.695120	33.8141
Norway	Kroner	0.123041	0.162869	7.9228
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012445	0.016474	0.8014
South Africa	Rand	0.102365	0.135501	6.5914
Sweden	Kroner	0.108038	0.143010	6.9567
Syria	Pound	0.014553	0.019264	0.9371
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022876	0.030281	1.4730
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000352	0.000466	0.0227

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 15, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 15, 2007

BTr to auction off less bills, bonds in 2nd qtr

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT WILL AUCTION off less Treasury bills and bonds from April to June, compared with the programmed floats in the first quarter, as its improved fiscal position, supported by large privatization proceeds, has trimmed its borrowing needs.

The Bureau of Treasury yesterday announced that it would issue P62 billion worth of government securities in the second quarter, a billion pesos lower than the original programmed borrowing of P63 billion for the first quarter, but slightly higher than the P59 billion in actual domestic borrowings made in the second quarter of 2006.

In a memorandum to banks, National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the bureau would supply P32 billion worth of T-bills and P30 billion worth of T-bonds during the second quarter.

The T-bills, with 91-day, 182-day and 364-day maturities, will be auctioned off every other Wednesday from April 4 to June 27.

T-bonds maturing in 2, 3 5, 7 and 10 years will be issued almost every other Thursday from April 12 to June 21.

The government chalked up a rare cash budget surplus of P11.1 billion in February, largely due to privatization proceeds, following the sale of its indirect stake in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. This resulted in a lower-than-programmed fiscal deficit of P18.6 billion for first two months of the year.

Cruz has been saying that "there's cash coming out of our ears," and the government could even afford to reject bids which would not reflect market trading rates.

BCDA builds facilities for Villamor

State agency puts up structures in exchange for land it acquired

By Ronnel W. Domingo

The STATE-RUN BASES CONVERSION DEVELopment Authority has almost finished building 20 facilities at the Villamor Air Base in exchange for the land it took over for conversion.

BCDA president and chief executive Narciso Abaya yesterday said the facilities, with a combined worth of P294 million, included support structures that were meant to "replicate" the buildings that stood on the 25-hectare land which the agency took over from the air base.

The agency is mandated by law to convert all or part of former and existing military bases into other productive use.

The law also provides that the BCDA should replace structures and facilities it would take along with the land identified for conversion.

Abaya said among the facilities the BCDA replicated for Villamor were six dormitory buildings that could accommodate a total of 1,000 Air Force personnel.

Other structures were offices and the quarters of officers, doctors and nurses.

"These replicated facilities are expected to boost the morale and address the welfare of Air Force personnel in support of their duties," Abaya said. "The enlisted men would directly benefit from the new buildings more than the officers."

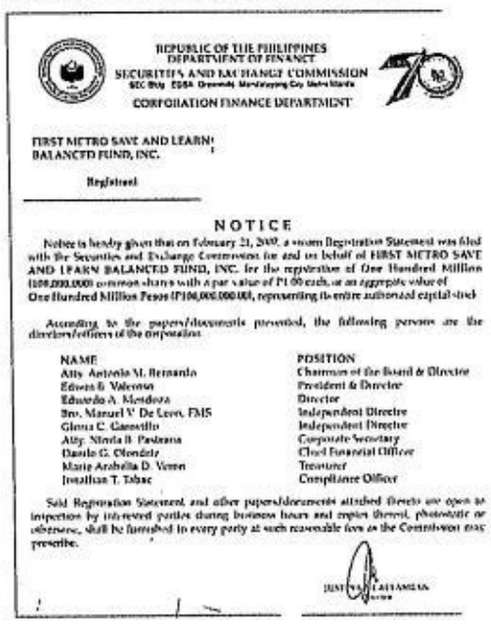
Abaya said BCDA had identified a total of P624 million worth of structures to replace in Villamor alone. This means P400 milion worth of new structures are in the pipeline.

Aileen Zosa, BCDA vice president for business development, said that the 25-hectare property in Villamor is now being developed into "Newport City," composed of commercial, residential and recreational areas.

In partnership with Megaworld Corp., Newport City is intended to offer amenities that include a convention center, sports complex, airport hotel and serviced apartments.

Since its creation 15 years ago, BCDA has replicated some P9.5 billion worth of military structures and support facilities, most of which are located in Fort Bonifacio.

BCDA is also managing lands in other former military installations, including Camp John Hay in Baguio City and Poro Point in La Union.



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Bldg. EDSA Greenhills Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN BALANCED FUND, INC.
Registrant

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on February 21, 2007, a sworn Registration Statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN BALANCED FUND, INC. for the registration of One Hundred Million (100,000,000) common shares with a par value of P1.00 each, or an aggregate value of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00), representing its entire authorized capital stock.

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the directors/officers of the corporation:

NAME	POSITION
Atty. Antonio M. Bernardo	Chairman of the Board & Director
Edwin B. Valerino	President & Director
Eduardo A. Mendoza	Director
Bro. Manuel V. De Leon, FMS	Independent Director
Gloria C. Gamotillo	Independent Director
Atty. Nicola B. Pastoras	Corporate Secretary
Danilo G. Obendaiz	Chief Financial Officer
Marie Arabella D. Veron	Treasurer
Jonathan T. Tabac	Compliance Officer

Said Registration Statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Acting Director

Gov't urged to sustain ship modernization program

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINE INTERISLAND Shipping Association has called on the government to sustain funding for the program to modernize roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) vessels.

The National Development Co.'s Maritime Leasing Corp. (NMLC) has launched its Shipping Enhancement and Acquisition through a Lease-Finance (SEAL) program to improve roll-on roll-off services in the country.

"The leasing program is OK, we just hope it will be sustained," Pisa president Leonardo Odono said.

NMLC president Agustin Bengzon, meanwhile, assured the group that the government and overseas development assistance funds will be able to support SEAL.

To help Ro-Ro operators, NMLC will finance 90 percent of the vessel's total project cost and will require only a 10-percent deposit without real estate collateral or mortgage.

The NMLC will prioritize applications for acquisition of ships that will serve ports in tourist destinations, underserved routes, and the country's super regions, Bengzon said.

He added that the NMLC will also support the development of the shipbuilding industry, especially in the introduction of new, locally built ships in order to generate investments and employment.

Odono said that, aside from support in leasing ships, tanker operators will need additional incentives, such as fuel subsidies, to be able to finance refleeting efforts.

Each locally made Ro-Ro vessel with 500 to 1,000 gross revenue tonnage—the total enclosed space in a ship—costs about $3 million, or P150 million.

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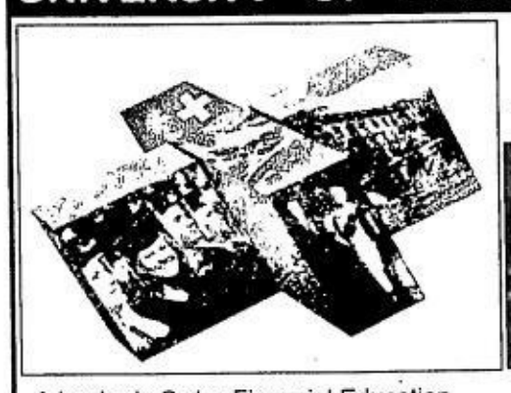

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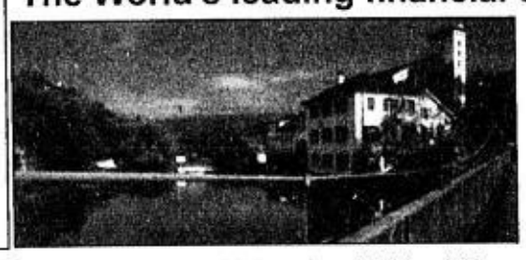

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For more information please contact:
Mrs. Sarah Scheyer, UBFS Official Representative in the Philippines
Tel: 776-0874, Fax: 823-1014, Mobile: 0922-8772680 Email: euromart@hotmail.com
Visit our website at: www.ubfs.ch , info@ubfs.ch

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7. Mechanical and Heavy Equipment Supervisor (1 or more)
8. Heavy Equipment and Dump Truck Maintenance staff (5 or more)
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- Necessary with experience
- Can speak and understand English

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LA/MAT 16530/2006 (S15)
FCMC 14083/2006

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE
HONGKONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
MATRIMONIAL CAUSES NO. 14083 OF 2006

BETWEEN

MILA A. FELICIANO Petitioner
Also known as **TALASTAS, MILA FELICIANO**

And

MICHAEL R. TALASTAS Respondent

A DIVORCE PETITION HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST THE UNDERMENTIONED MICHAEL R. TALASTAS, late of Valdefuente, Cabanatuan City, Philippines, may apply at the Family Court Registry at M2, Wanchai Law Court, No. 12 Harbour Road, Hong Kong SAR for a copy of the Petition. If within one month he has not communicated with the Registry, the Court may hear the case in his absence.

Register

To be advertised as follows :-
Once in Philippine Daily Inquirer

(PDI--March 17, 2007)

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY

IS IN NEED OF:

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY INSPECTORS (ICASI)

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's Degree in any Engineering Course. Psychology, ECE and IT related course is an advantage.
- With Professional License or Career Service Professional Eligibility;
- FEMALE, 5'4" in height, between 21 to 25 years old;
- Possesses excellent interpersonal, presentation and English communication skills both written and verbal.
- Highly proficient in MS Word, Excel and Powerpoint
- Highly organized and systematic.

Qualified applicants will be trained by ICAO accredited Training Center(s) and/or recognized AVSEC Training Institution in the Philippines. Successful applicants shall oversee all aviation security and quality control tasks as required by the ASP and NCASP to meet and sustain ICAO Annex 17 Standard 3.4.7 at the airport level.

Qualified applicants are invited to submit personally the following:

1. Resume / Personal Data Sheet (PDS);
2. Recent 2x2 picture;
3. Latest Community Tax Certificate;
4. Photocopy of Diploma or Transcript of Records;
5. Photocopy of Certificate of training / seminars attended;
6. Certificate of Eligibility Rating (CSC), if any;
7. NBI Clearance.

Bring original copy of item nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7 for authentication to:

LBP SERVICE CORPORATION
Unit C & D, 21/F Petron Megaplaza Building
Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City
Trunkline: (02) 843-2077 locals 213 / 214

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION IS ON MARCH 30, 2007

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Provincial Capitol Malaybalay City
Tel. # 088-221-4820 & Telefax # 088-221-2537
E-mail Add: buk_provi_bac@yahoo.com.ph

Revised on July 28, 2004
Contract Reference Number: 759-750-07-001-A

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR
Bids and Awards Committee

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (RE-BID)

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF BUKIDNON, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility to bid and re-bid for the hereunder projects:

NAME OF THE PROJECT	:	Project I – DRUGS AND MEDICINES Project II - MEDICAL, LABORATORY SUPPLIES AND REAGENTS
LOCATION	:	Provincial General Services Office
BRIEF DESCRIPTION	:	For the use of Seven (7) Provincial Hospitals and Twenty-Two (22) Health Stations for the FIRST semester of CY 2007.
Approved Budget for the contract	:	Project I - P11,593,569.19 Project II - P216,767.44
DELIVERY PERIOD	:	15 working days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed
PLACE OF DELIVERY	:	Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 19, 2007
2. Pre-bid conference	March 14, 2007
3. Application for Eligibility	March 19, 2007
4. Opening of Bids Deadline for the submission of Bid documents	March 28, 2007 March 28, 2007 not later than 9:00 am
5. Notice of Award	April 04, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to Prospective Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00 for Drugs and Medicines and P300.00 for Medical, Laboratory, Supplies and Reagents, at the **Provincial Treasurer's Office.**

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the BAC office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security equal to 1% for Cash, Certified check, Cashier's check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable letter of credit; 1.5% for Bank guarantee; 2.5% for Surety bond of the Approved Budget for the Contract as advertised. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

The Province of Bukidnon reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES
Prov'l. Admin/BAC Chairman

(PDI--March 10 & 17, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON AUDIT
Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Re-Bid Procurement / Acquisition of Security Services

1. The Commission On Audit intends to apply the sum of Ten Million Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P10,300,000.00) broken down as follows:

Lot	Office	Approved Budget for the Contract
I	COA Central Office, Professional Development Sector and COA Regional Office No. IV, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City	P9,098,417.50
II	COA Regional Office No. III, Government Center, Brgy. Mampis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga	P1,201,582.50
	TOTAL ABC	P10,300,000.00

Being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the procurement/acquisition of security services for its Offices covering the period from May 1, 2007 to April 30, 2008. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

2. Interested Bidders may obtain complete set of Bidding Documents starting March 19, 2007 to April 11, 2007 upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Seven Thousand Pesos (P 7,000.00) from Dir. Mila R. Peñas c/o the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Division, COA Central Office, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.
3. The Commission on Audit will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties at 2:00 PM, March 26, 2007 at the BAC Office, Room 102, Ground Floor Former SAADO Bldg., COA Complex, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.
4. Deadline for submission of Bids shall be on April 12, 2007, 2:00 PM at the BAC Office, Room 102, Ground Floor Former SAADO Bldg., COA Complex, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. Immediately after the deadline, bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
5. The Commission on Audit reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ARCADIO B. CUENCO, JR.
Assistant Commissioner
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – March 17, 2007)

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The AECOM Growth with Equity in Mindanao (AECOM-GEM) consortium, which is an integrated team of leading U.S. and Philippine development organizations, is assembling a high-caliber team to conduct programs that will improve the quality of life and prospects for peace in Mindanao. We value highly participatory development and emphasize the engagement of local staff in their communities and regions. For upcoming work that we are preparing for USAID, AECOM-GEM is seeking senior, mid, and junior-level professionals in multiple disciplines with the following qualifications:

Discipline areas:

- Management and Administration – Office Management, Administration, Logistics/ Travel, Communications, Contracting, Clerical/Secretary
- Accounting and Finance – Finance Manager, Senior and Junior Accountants
- Governance – Planning, LGU Coordination, Conflict Management
- Infrastructure – Design Engineer, Civil Designer, CADD Graphics Technician, Document Control Technician, Environmental Assessment Specialist, Construction Supervision Engineer, Site Engineer, Construction Inspectors
- Business Development – Marketing Specialist, Business Organization Liaison, Business Development Manager, Business Promotion Specialist
- Training and Employment – Vocational Training Specialist, Scholarship/Internship Manager, Vocational Education Manager, Vocational Trainers

Education and Experience

- Applicants should provide degree and work experience relevant to discipline and position for which they are applying.
- Strong skills in oral presentations and written communications in English is required, and knowledge of local dialects is an advantage.
- Ability to work well with others in teams, provide leadership and consensus-building is desirable.
- Also desirable is experience in: economic development projects with local government units (LGUs), community development or community organizing, institution-building and training, agricultural development and agri-business, social marketing and advertising campaigns, public relations and media.

Qualified applicants are asked to send an expression of interest letter with a CV and contact address and phone number to **AECOM.GEM@gmail.com** on or before March 26.

Candidates that are short-listed for further consideration with be contacted by firms in the consortium about specific positions that are available and provided more detail.

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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

SECURITY PLANT COMPLEX (SPC) DISPOSAL COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Notice is hereby given that the Security Plant Complex, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) will sell/auction thru sealed bids unused bunker "C" fuel; air-conditioning refrigerant (R-11); unserviceable computers, printers, UPS, and various printing supplies and consumables, dismantled building fixtures (like used water closet, lavatory), unserviceable tables, typewriters; armored truck, and other scrap materials.

The SPC Disposal Committee must receive the sealed bids not later than 10:00 a.m. on 26 March 2007 at Room 504, 5th Floor, Building A, BSP Security Plant Complex, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

Bidders for bunker "C" fuel, air-conditioning refrigerant (R-11), unserviceable computers, printers, UPS, and various printing supplies and consumables must be DENR-accredited handlers of hazardous materials.

Interested parties can inspect the said items from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on March 20, 21, and 22, 2007 at the BSP Security Plant Complex.

Auction forms can be obtained from the SPC Disposal Committee's Executive Officer, Mrs. Rouena L. Rosal at Room 405, 4th Floor, Building A, BSP Security Plant Complex, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, Tel. No. 920-2003.

(Sgd.) ORLANDO B. ASIDDAO
Chairman

(PDI – March 17, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

NENITA LUGUE GORRE

February 24, 1936 – March 14, 2007

*Peacefully joined our Creator and her husband **ELIEZER** on March 14, 2007 at the age of 71.*

Her loving children **James, Eric, Ingrid, Maria** and **Edgar & Jeng**; grandchildren **Danee, Nikki** and **John** together with her siblings **Steven & Minda, Leopoldo & Teresa, Carmelo & Helen, Myrna & Jan, Amelita & Boy** and **Teresita & Jun** and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 14, 2007 at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Arlington.

"Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the death of his saints"
Psalms 116:15

NARCISA BULOS DIOQUINO

Born: 29 October 1936

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 14, 2007

Her bereaved husband, **Jose Dioquino Jr.**; children **Lalaine** (†) and **Willy, Shan** and **Reggie, John** and **Jeanette, Imee, Coree**; grandchildren **Issa, Michael, Kevin, Kenneth, Jiolo, Dana, Juden** and **Jaron.**

Her body lies in state at Chapel E, Loyola Guadalupe, Makati City (March 15-17) and to be transferred to Christian Evangelical Fellowship via Sylvia St. San Sebastian, Tarlac, Tarlac on March 18, 2007.

Interment will be on Tuesday, March 20, 2007, 8:00 am at Eternal Memorial, San Sebastian Tarlac, Tarlac.

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
The Widest Read Classifieds

More Classified Ads:

National Food Authority A4
Department of Education A4
Department of Health - Ilocos A8
Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management A8
Department of Labor and Employment-NCR A9
National Housing Authority A17
Zamboanga Electric A17

"... I trust in your unfailing love,
my heart rejoices in your salvation."
(Psalm 13:5)

PEDRO M. RODRIGUEZ

"Pete"

7th July 1929 – 14th March 2007

He is survived by wife **Puring del Rosario**, children **Alma & Dod, Rico, Elvie, Rene & Camille, Rachel & Arnul, Jomari & May**; grandchildren **Wiley, Nigel, Conor & Caleb Peralta; Allen, Alyanna & Alyssa Zabala; Francis, Frances, Tracy & Casey Rodriguez**.

His remains lie in state at Paket Santiago Memorial Homes, 9 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City. Memorial Service will be held on 17th March, Saturday at 7:00 p.m.

Interment will be tomorrow, 18th March at the Loyola Memorial Park Garden of Memories after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Paket Memorial Chapel.

ARTHUR U. LANARIA

Died in the grace of our Lord
on March 15, 2007 at the age of 90.

His loving wife, **ZENAIDA DIZON LANARIA**; children **JOY, ARTHUR & JEANNIE, JOHN ROBERT & ABIGAIL**; grandchildren **MAAN, GELO, MACKEE, MJ, ARTHUR III & VINCENT**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul in heaven.

His remains lie in state at the Chapel – 14, La Funeraria Paz, Inc., 143 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Tuesday, March 20, 2007 at Paz Crematory.

Interment of ashes follows right after the cremation at St. Peter's Parish, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.

JUSTICE ANTONIO M. MARTINEZ (Ret.)

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court (1997 to 1999)

Peacefully joined his Creator
on Friday, 16th of March 2007
at the age of 78.

His beloved wife **Chita**; children **Bobby & Melanie, Cha & Eric**, and **Dindo & Joy**; grandchildren **Vanessa, Kriselle, Robin & Paolo, Miko, Karen & Erika, Inky, Wax & Iya**; request fervent prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan from March 16-20, 2007. Necrological Services at the Supreme Court will be in the morning, March 19, 2007.

Interment will be in the morning of March 21, 2007 at the Heritage Park, Taguig City.

HIS EMINENCE GAUDENCIO B. CARDINAL ROSALES, D.D.

Archbishop of Manila

The clergy of the Archdiocese of Manila; bereaved brothers & sisters-in-law: **Carlos & Nenita, Jose & Marita, Ezekiel & Elida**; nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews, relatives and friends

deeply mourn the demise of

REV. FR. MARIO MAGDALENO CRUZ

who died on March 15, 2007 at the age of 73.

His body now lies in state at #4 Soli Street, Sangandaan, Caloocan City.

Funeral Mass will be on Tuesday, March 20, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at San Roque Cathedral, A. Mabini Street, Caloocan City with His Eminence Gaudencio B. Cardinal Rosales, D.D., as main celebrant.

Interment will follow at the Holy Cross Cemetery, Quirino Highway, San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City.

The faithful are requested to pray for the repose of his soul.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

MA. DELIA ALAMPAY LIMPINGCO

March 18, 1936 – March 5, 2007

Would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who, in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

We find strength in knowing that she touched so many lives. She will continue living in our hearts and through the lives we lead as testament to her legacy of love.

TERESITA RODENAS ABAD

Peacefully joined her Creator
on March 08, 2007 at the age of 74.

Her beloved husband ***Romeo Sr.*** *(†)*
Her children ***Tess & Jun, Bel & Raul, Romeo Jr. & Mel, Nong & Madja, Raymund & Carol, Michael & Babsie, Tony & Cathy***

Her grandchildren ***Anthony, Angelo, Carl, Mikee, Michelle, Paolo, Christine, Melanie, Daniel*** *and* ***Katrina*** *request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.*

Her remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz (Sucat). Interment will be at the Manila Memorial Park (Sucat) on March 20, 2007 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

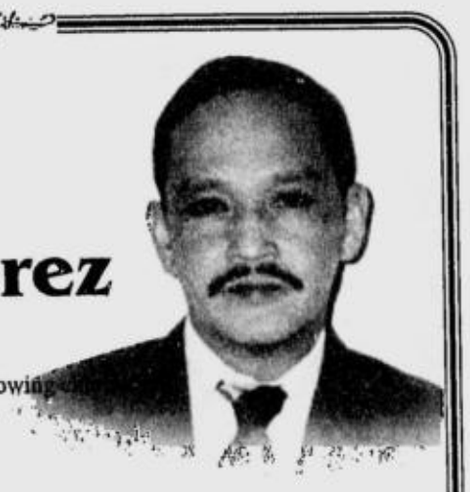
"God has you in His keeping; we have you in our hearts."

In Loving Memory

On the Fifth Death Anniversary of

Ramon "Mon" P. Perez

Of Batangas City



Holy Masses will be offered today, Saturday, March 17, 2007 at the following churches:

Basilica of the Immaculate Conception – Batangas City
Our Lady of Miraculous Medal – Subic Agoncillo, Batangas
St. Francis de Paola Parish Church – Mabini, Batangas
San Isidro Labrador Parish – Bo. San Isidro, Batangas City
St. James the Greater Parish – Ibaan, Batangas
St. Michael the Archangel Parish Church – Ilijan, Batangas City
San Roque Parish Church – Lemery, Batangas

His loving wife **Susan**; children, **Erwin, Mikko, Erika** and **Allen**; mother **Nanay Azon**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to remember "**Amon**" in their prayers.

E-mail: pr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Text us your feedback: inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Protect unborn child, docs tell moms-to-be

By Tessa R. Salazar

SHOULD MOMS-TO-BE be shielded from emotional trauma to protect their unborn child?

If you ask doctors, the answer is an emphatic yes. But they also add that the husbands should do all they can as well to behave.

Dr. Corazon Yabes Almirante, congress president of the International Congress Fetus as a Patient International Society, urges pregnant mothers to be careful in making sure that the environment of the unborn child should be conducive for survival. She adds that emotional trauma could induce contractions in a pregnant woman.

"The mind of the mother should be at peace at the time of pregnancy," Almirante says.

Heightened emotional state

Extreme stress, she explains, can induce contractions of the uterus and vasoconstrictions of the blood vessels—the effects of adrenaline produced in higher levels by the body during perceived stressful situations. During the mother's heightened emotional state, there could be less supply of the blood going to the fetus and to the uterus, which could lead to hypertension of the mother.

Almirante stresses that families, friends and especially the father of an unborn child should always have this in mind.

Dr. Visitacion P. Antonio of the Philippine Pediatric Society agrees. "Husbands should not give problems to their pregnant wives for the sake of the unborn child."

Antonio explains that aside from lungs, which are crucial for the baby's survival, all the other organs of the baby in the womb could be affected by stress. A newborn prematurely delivered due to stress may also suffer from immature organ function such as the lungs, brain, liver, kidney and immune system. These organs may later on be compromised. Prolonged stay in the neonatal intensive care unit may also result in infection.

Why steroids?

Antonio also explains that steroids are sometimes administered to the pregnant women. She says this is necessary for the lung maturity of the unborn child. If premature labor or contractions did, indeed, lead to a premature birth, the steroids would help the baby increase his or her chances of survival.

According to Antonio, steroids would be able to induce the enzymes in the lungs to produce surfactant that would enable the lungs to function normally. Premature infants lack the enzymes that produce surfactant, and if not administered with steroids, the infant would not be able to breathe on its own within eight hours.

The lungs, Antonio argues, may be the most important organ to develop after birth. "Without properly functioning lungs, oxygen cannot reach the child's brain. This could lead to seizures and cerebral palsy," she says.

Thus, a simple problem such as stress that adults shrug off with a laugh can cause perinatal stress and lead to infants' cerebral palsy.

"We encounter babies born normally, but then suffer seizures later on. When we refer them to neurologists, they find no other probable cause but perinatal stress," Antonio observes.

Diabetic mothers

Almirante says there are additional treatments that can be given to hasten the maturity of the lungs, particularly if the mother is diabetic. She stresses that diabetic mothers would do well to carry the baby full-term to enable surfactant to be produced normally.

Almirante says, however, that the most common cause of premature labor—95 percent—would still be infection and not stress. Contractions caused by stress or heightened emotional states can be offset by rest and relaxation, or if necessary, by sedation.

Almirante says there are studies documenting long-term effects of extreme perinatal stress on babies.

"I have a patient who said her second child had an entirely different personality from the first. The second child, who was in her womb when she had problems with her husband, grew up always sad and grumpy. The first child was always optimistic and happy," Almirante narrates.

How safe are insect repellents?

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

THE DENGUE COLUMN (DEC. 31, 2006) generated a lot of reader response, among them a suggestion from Dr. Virge Saldajeno that chemical repellents be used to ward off mosquitoes.

Another reader, A. Fernandez of Poblacion in Liloan, Cebu [binhi12644@yahoo.com], counters this suggestion. He writes:

Toxic DEET

Chemical repellents usually have DEET (dimethyl-toluamide). I quote from the book "Designer Poisons: How to Protect Your Health and Home From Toxic Pesticides" (1995, Pesticide Education Center, pec@igc.org) by San Francisco-based physician Dr. Marion Moses:

"DEET is very toxic to the brain and nervous system. Mild poisoning can cause headache, restlessness, irritability. Children might have crying spells or other changes in behavior. Severe poisoning can cause slurring of speech, tremor (shakiness), convulsions and coma. There is a report of a 5-year-old child at a day camp who had a major seizure (convulsion) without any other symptoms shortly after DEET was applied to his skin. DEET has caused death in children from absorption through the skin when it was applied repeatedly or in a high concentration."

DEET can also cause allergic reactions, sometimes so severe that it results in anaphylactic shock, which can lead to death if not treated promptly. (This is rare, thankfully.) DEET can also harm reproduction in lab animals, thus pregnant women should avoid using any product with it.

The author goes on, "There is an Avon product called Skin-So-Soft that contains mineral oil. It is widely used as an insect repellent by those who want to avoid toxic chemicals. It can apparently be effective in some cases, but must be applied more frequently and in larger amounts than DEET. It is not an insect repellent and the company makes no such claims."

Clothing, of course, with long sleeves and pants, also helps protect against mosquitoes, but in a tropical country, it is probably not going to work, especially with children.

I am quite astonished by the casual use of pesticides in the home by consumers who know very little about their adverse effects. Popular nerve-gas type pesticides (mostly carbamate) are neurotoxic, and other chemicals have been linked to nasal cancer according to Dr. Moses.

I highly recommend this book as a useful reference. Consumer education to provide nontoxic and environment-friendly alternatives is sorely needed.

Generally safe

Dr. Saldajeno responds:

I agree with being very careful with potentially toxic chemicals for whatever purpose, where to prevent or treat disease. Prudence does dictate weighing risks versus benefits before using an intervention.

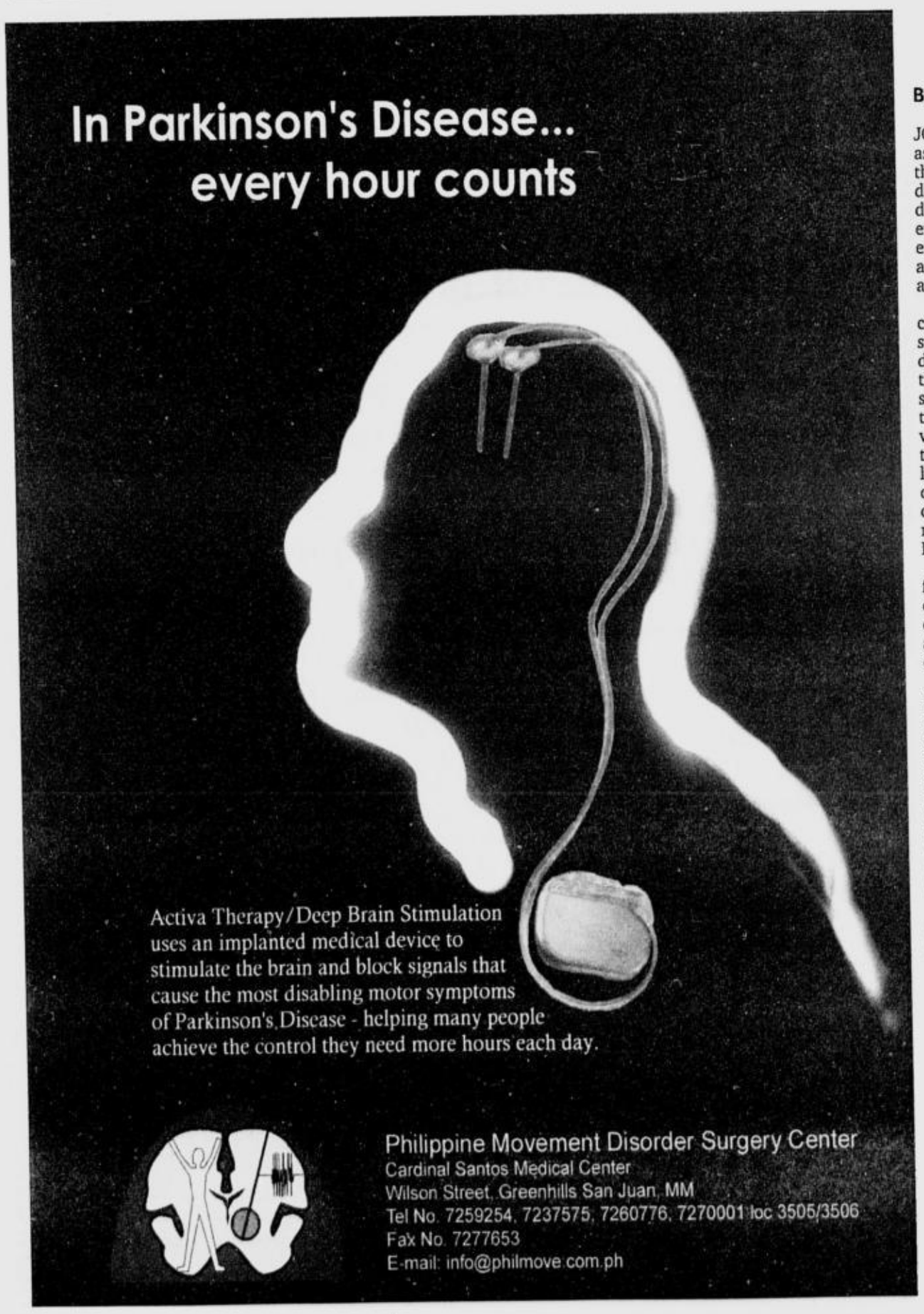
The concerns re DEET have been debated within the medical community for years. However, most recently it has been felt that it is generally safe when used as directed in individuals older than two months. Of course, it should only be used if there is a real risk from mosquito-borne infections. As to how effective Skin-So-Soft or citronella oil lotions are, I can tell you that they are not as effective as DEET. A 2002 article from the reliable and prestigious New England Journal of Medicine showed how effective DEET is (http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/abstract/347/1/13?maxtos).

I give you another link to recent information about DEET, which comes from the US Environmental Protection Agency: http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/chemicals/deet.htm. Our Department of Health or the Philippine Pediatric Society may have their own views, so check with them.

I also declare for the sake of transparency that I have no relationship with any company that makes or sells DEET-containing products. *(To be concluded next week)*

* * *

Queena N. Lee-Chua is a professor of mathematics and psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.



Coffee debate still percolating

MEDICAL FILES

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

JOCELYN DE LOS SANTOS OF ALABANG asks in her e-mail if coffee is good or bad for the heart. "I'm getting confused with what my doctors tell me," she says. "One doctor, who drinks four to five cups of coffee a day, says it's even good for the heart. The other says it can elevate the blood pressure and can even cause a heart attack. What should I believe?" she asks.

Well, Jocelyn, I don't think any health expert can give you a straightforward categorical answer to your question at this point. The coffee debate is still percolating and the diametrically opposed answers of your doctors reflect the magnitude of the controversy and how the arguments can swim extremely to one side or the other like a pendulum. Everyone realizes though that this is a serious problem that needs to be addressed since coffee is one of the most imbibed beverages, if not the most imbibed, worldwide including the Philippines.

Short-term studies have indicated that caffeine intake increases blood pressure and increases heart rate which causes palpitations and occasionally irregular heart beats. These effects are supposed to weaken with time, but health experts are not sure now.

Prof. Ana Baylin and her colleagues from Harvard's School of Public Health, in a study published in Epidemiology last year found an association between coffee consumption and a higher incidence of first, nonfatal heart attacks. Most people in the study reported drinking two to three cups of coffee per day.

No direct association

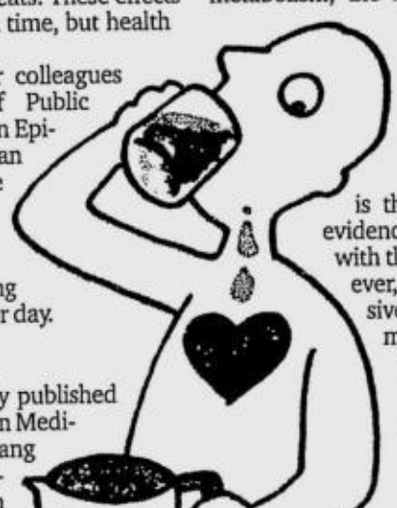
However, in another study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Prof. Wolfgang Winkelmayer and his colleagues from the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts found no direct association between caffeine consumption and the development of high blood pressure. This was a robust study in 155,594 women who had participated in the Nurses' Health Studies (NHS) 1 and 2.

The results are truly confusing. But what is well known is that caffeine is metabolized mainly in the liver through the action of a particular enzyme. In some individuals, there can be genetic variations that can slow down caffeine's metabolism and can cause exaggerated effects of caffeine especially if taken in big quantities. This is what might cause the potentially undesirable effects on the heart and the cardiovascular system.

This explanation about the genetic variations in caffeine metabolism was thrown into the percolating coffee debate by researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health, the University of Costa Rica and the University of Toronto. They tested the blood of 2,014 people who had had a heart attack and showed that many of them carried the particular gene variant that caused caffeine to be metabolized slowly. The amount of coffee consumption in these individuals directly correlated with the risk for a heart attack.

Higher risk

The researchers found that the people who carried the gene variation which slowed down caffeine metabolism and who drank two to three cups of coffee each day had a 36 percent higher risk of having a heart attack. Those in the same category who drank four or more cups of coffee each day had a 64 percent increased risk. This is almost just as high as the risk for a heart attack caused by smoking. What is even more striking in this study is that the younger the age of those who had the gene that caused slow caffeine metabolism, the higher the risk of having a heart attack associated with increasing amounts of coffee. Could this be one reason our heart attack patients are getting younger and younger?



This genetic-variation study is the single strongest scientific evidence linking coffee drinking with the risk of a heart attack. However, this is far from being conclusive and definitive. We need more research to prove this hypothesis.

What is the bottom line about coffee and what advice can we give almost every other Filipino who's seduced by the aromatic scent of a freshly brewed coffee? Since we don't have the facilities yet locally to find out if one has the genetic variation which slows down caffeine metabolism, it's best to limit one's coffee intake to one cup a day which ordinarily contains less than 100 milligrams of caffeine. This level has not been associated with increased cardiovascular risk even in slow caffeine metabolizers. Too much decaffeinated coffee also has been reported to increase cardiovascular risk. Shifting to decaf won't really solve the problem. So the next time you think of brewing your second cup of coffee for the day, think again.

How green design affects children's creativity and social skills

OPEN play spaces are essential to children's development.

WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus

ONE OF THE KEY ELEMENTS OF green design is the responsibility of the present generation to leave behind a world that can sustain and nourish the next generation. It is through this concept that green design provides children a learning and creative environment.

Unfortunately this is far from what is happening in many countries, including the Philippines. To a large extent, many of today's children have been affected negatively by the way our cities and buildings have been designed.

We now face a generation of youngsters who are involved in disciplinary cases such as bullying in school, vandalism, immoral behavior, violence, suicide, poor physical condition and lack of interest in studying.

This is the case in some developed countries, where recent studies have shown that the unruly behavior of children have been discouraging young couples from starting a family. This has contributed to many nations' falling birthrate. People are not confident in becoming parents, which now poses a deep problem for their future.

Reasons for the problems

There are many reasons for children's problems, and the lack of learning experience through play may be among the most important. Many children, especially in urban areas like Manila which is adult-oriented, have little opportunity to play. As a result, they lose their chance to develop their creativity, muscular dexterity, social skills and emotional sensitivity through play.

Many children today are confined to limited spaces because most play spaces have been reduced. Recent middle- and low-income developments show reduced sizes of lots and virtually no private yards.

Most children living in very tall buildings have the tendency to be less self-reliant. Each time they need to go down to play they rely on their mothers or guardians to help them use the elevators.

In multilevel school buildings schoolchildren on the upper floors have little time to go down and play during breaks compared to those in lower floors.

Traditional outdoor games

Filipino children used to spend a lot of time playing outdoors. Traditional Filipino outdoor games were very popular then such as *patintero*, a game played by scoring as many passes as a team can, or the *sipa*, played with a ball made of cane over a court divided by a net, or the *palo sebo*, a bamboo climbing contest or the coconut stilt race, or the sack race, or the tug of war. The girls played *piko* or the native hop scotch after school. There are so many other games that the previous generation is familiar with.

With the advent of television, the amount of time children spent playing outdoors dropped dramatically. In 1983, when the video game was introduced this caused more children to spend their time indoors. This means children did not need to seek groups of other children to be able to play. Latest reports indicate that millions of children all over the world are now addicted to computer games, further eroding the concept of social groups of children who regularly get together to play.

Computer games move with great speed making children of this generation impatient. Computer and television provide information; however, there is no substitute for discussions and get-togethers with family and friends.

Skills through play

Children develop many skills through play. Learning social interaction, building human relationships and developing emotional sensitivity are skills they will need when they become adults.

When children play, their imagination is stimulated developing their creativity. As they play in open spaces, such as parks, children become familiar with the landscape which develops their affection toward their physical surroundings.

Play spaces

Areas where children can play in groups are normally in open spaces where they can play ball and are able to roam and run around freely. Nature spaces are also important areas where children get in contact with animals and nature. Even street spaces allow children to play in groups close to their homes.

Today more and more children get to play only in artificial play spaces where their movements are restricted. Many do not consider other places as potential play areas, thereby losing their ability to discover new possibilities by themselves.

What to do?

We need to develop more accessible green spaces. As mentioned in previous articles, converting hard surfaces of roof decks into landscaped green roofs is one possible solution especially in highly congested areas of the metropolis. With properly designed safeguards this type of play area is most convenient for little children who do not need to cross busy streets to reach a play space.

We may convert vacant lots in the city not just into the usual basketball courts but into landscaped areas where children of all ages can play and, more important, interact with other children. If funds from private organizations are available, basic child-friendly amenities like public toilets and wash areas can be installed. Children are never too young to be taught good toilet habits.

In Europe and the United States, adventure playgrounds are quite popular. These are secured play spaces that are closely supervised by their parents or volunteers. The children are not limited by fixed play equipment and they are excellent places for interacting with other children.

Perhaps the best approach to providing children with play spaces is by designing our cities with children in mind. Whether this is done by legislation or through private initiatives, the next step is to change our lifestyle. Providing well-designed play spaces however, is no substitute for the time and care that parents give for the proper upbringing of their children so that they grow up to be mature, competent and responsible citizens.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.

A Swiss weekend for corporate warriors at Brittany's CrossWinds

IT'S WHERE CLEAN CRISP PINE-SCENTED mountain air meets the comforts of modern living.

A tranquil Tagaytay retreat inspired by the Swiss Alps that draws weary urbanites to relax and rejuvenate in nature's bosom.

Known as the purveyor of creative and innovative lifescapes, maverick masterplanner Brittany Corp. redefines the real estate landscape with the lush and invigorating panorama of CrossWinds. Located on the left side of the highway just beyond Picnic Grove and the road from the South Luzon Expressway exit via Sta. Rosa, CrossWinds is a serene weekend escape especially for Manila residents in dire need of a break from the urban jungle.

"We know how weekends are sacred to our market because it's when they seek peace and comfort. It's all about spending time with family, recharging for the busy week ahead, and doing the things that matter most to them. And where they choose to spend these precious two days away from boardrooms, meetings and reports that fill their weekdays is a decision they take as seriously as the next business deal," Brittany president Jing Serrano reasoned.

Living the high life

It hardly came as a surprise when CrossWinds' mid-rise condominium, Grand Quartier Tower 1, immediately became a success. With its construction well on its way, Brittany now turns its attention to the Grand Quartier Tower 2 and its newly opened model unit. A visit to the Grand Quartier Tower 2 model unit shows the many wondrous possibilities of living the high life, Swiss style.

"The Grand Quartier Tower 2 represents the continued growth of a masterfully planned community. It goes beyond just building on the success of the Grand Quartier Tower 1. Foresight, research and a thorough understanding of our clients and their needs have enabled us to anticipate its popular reception and be prepared to accommodate the growing demand," Serrano said.

There are studio units and one- to three-bedroom residences to choose from. And with a maximum of 12 units per floor, it allows residents much-needed privacy to enjoy a quiet morning or to appreciate nature's handiwork. Serrano added that with fewer units to a floor with a well-configured layout, one can enjoy a breathtaking vista of Laguna, Manila and Cavite areas as well as a panoramic view of CrossWinds.

Wide range of choices

Units range from 39 to 209 sq m—giving clients a wider range of choices for greater flexibility in creating a space that would cater to their specific requirements. It also offers convertible units from studio to one-bedroom units or one-bedroom units to two-bedroom units without additional cost.

THE LIVING room of the Grand Quartier model unit exudes a cool and cozy charm.

EXPERIENCE the freshness and vitality of the Swiss

Just like the rest of the CrossWinds property, the Grand Quartier Tower 2 takes inspiration from Swiss architecture. Elements such as overhanging eaves, wood patterns and wide balconies all set against a lush green landscape provide a haven where one can truly feel at home away from home.

Inviting atmosphere

Various design details were used to ensure an inviting and comfortable atmosphere including a steeply pitched, gable roof with varying roof lines. The dark-stained wood trims provide contrast to the stucco walls in varying colors to brighten the rooms. French windows with planter boxes ensure that the house is flooded with sunshine and fresh air. The ceramic tiles and natural stone on the porch and balcony with stained wood finish and hand-carved patterns on the railing complete the look.

Amenities at the CrossWinds also include high speed Internet connection, underground cabling for power, communications and CATV, peak gardens, swimming pool, gazebos, nature trails, shaded walkways and a view deck.

CrossWinds also offers other product lines including custom home sites to build future chalets on; Swiss Quadrille—quad units in one wide lot that follows the contours of CrossWinds hills; and Deux Pointe—duetto series located at the highest and most prime location in CrossWinds and the only high-placed property available in Tagaytay today.

"The Grand Quartier Tower 2 is the grand Tagaytay getaway corporate warriors are looking for!" Serrano added. "A Swiss weekend just an hour and a half away from Manila with all the comforts that the good life can offer, it is difficult to imagine anything better than that!"

DMCI unveils Raya Garden's clubhouse

DMCI HOMES RECENTLY HELD the blessing and inauguration rites for Raya Garden Condominium's Grand Pavilion, a special event that signified the emergence of a growing community within this Bali-inspired sanctuary in the heart of Parañaque City.

On a Saturday morning last month, the pavilion was decorated with Asian embellishments such as fabrics that fluttered freely with the wind and other accents that exuded warmth and exotic charm. It was an auspicious day to hold a momentous occasion for Raya Garden, another resort-type development project of DMCI Homes distinguished by its Balinese architecture and design.

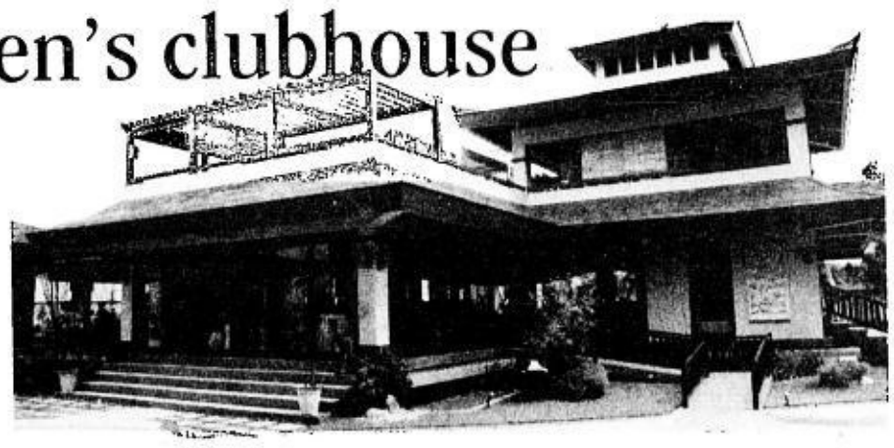
The program started with a short prayer led by Fr. Vir Pedragoza from Parañaque. He then invited key officials from DMCI for the ribbon-cutting ceremonies, including managing director Alfredo Austria, director for customer care Alfonso Cervero, director for sales Flor Ofrecio and Richard Ong, first resident of Raya Garden, as well as Fredesvinda Consunji representing her husband David, founder of DM Consunji Inc.

Blessing of structure

Fr. Pedragoza then performed the blessing of the structure, followed by the excited new unit owners who gamely participated in the event. As a popular custom among Filipinos, the blessing of houses or any new establishment is foreseen to drive away negative vibes from the venue while inviting positive energy into the facility.

In fact, the unit owners, represented by Richard Ong, were also officially granted the keys to their home by DMCI, through a ceremonial turnover. Ong's young family is the first official resident of Raya Garden, followed by more than 30 other families.

After short speeches from the officials who warmly welcomed homeowners and guests, everyone was invited to partake of the sumptuous Asian fusion lunch, while listening to guest performer Tribo Musika's haunting renditions.



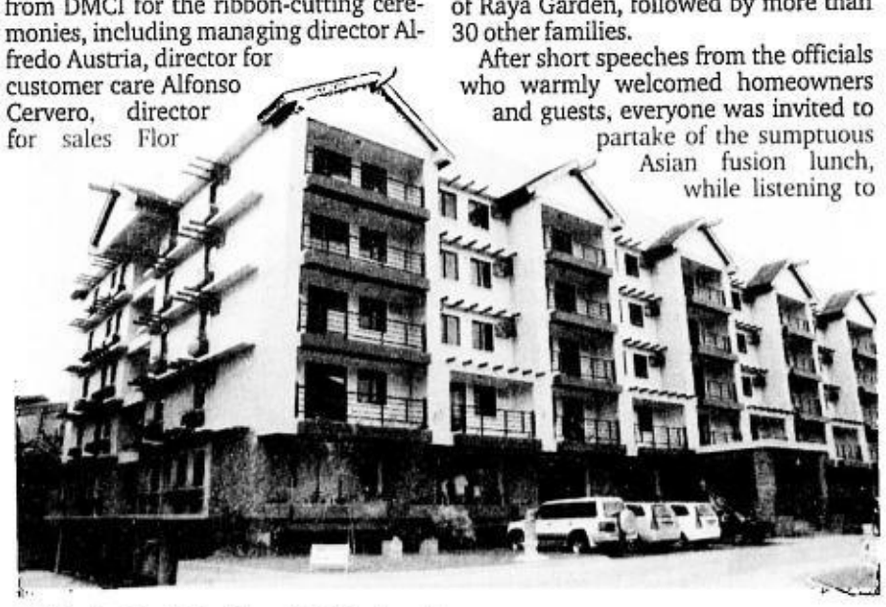
RAYA Garden's clubhouse

Tour of facilities

The guests milled around the pavilion for the duration of the day, feeling cozy at the inviting reception hall, the Lotus pond, Floating podium, Meditation Pavilion, Infinity-edge Plunge pool, view deck and indoor dining hall. Simultaneously, they were treated to more activities, such as bead-making and an interesting talk by a feng shui expert.

Other interested buyers toured the two-hectare facility, which is composed of five residential condominium buildings (three of which are medium-rise, 5-story and two high-rise 15-story structures). Two medium-rise buildings—Bali and Bandung—have been completed, while the other buildings are being prepared for turnover. Raya Garden has a total of 878 units, with standard 2-bedroom units of various sizes ranging from 42 to 59 sq m.

Guests observed the Raya Garden way of life has been associated with comfortable and stylish homes, distinguished by eclectic and contemporary Asian themes.



RAYA Garden's Bandung Building façade

Located on West Service Road, Merville, Parañaque City, Raya Garden is just 15 minutes away from Makati City and accessible to locations like the Fort Bonifacio Global City, Alabang/Filinvest Corporate City, Asian Hospital and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Unique features

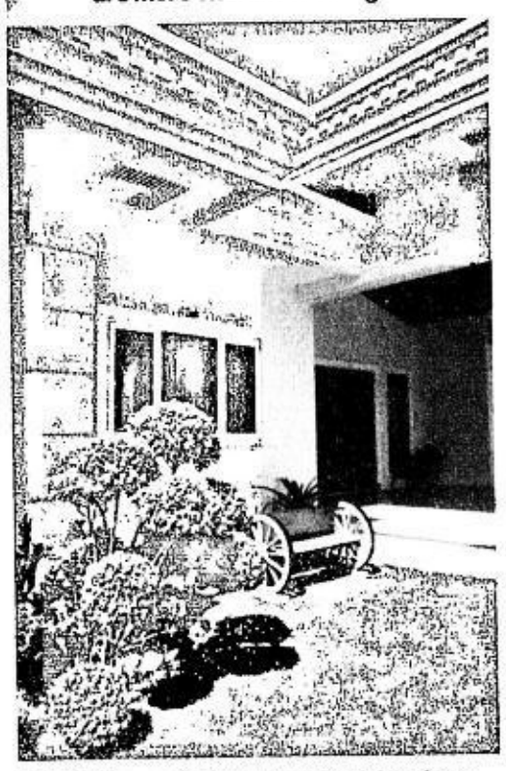
Alfonso Cervero, Customer Care Division director of DMCI Homes, said Raya Garden is designed with unique features like single-loaded corridors that open up to a garden space instead of a neighboring door; limited number of housing units per building to preserve exclusivity; a property management group which handles homeowners' daily concerns; and design for a 70:30 footprint to building space ratio that leaves ample gardens and more open areas.

For as low as 10 percent down payment, a homebuyer can already move in to the unit and enjoy the privileges of living in a DMCI Homes residential community. DMCI Homes is the only triple-A builder-developer that provides premium quality, urban-friendly, fully serviced communities to young middle-income families.

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

PROPERTY

THE PALILIO property is very open, thus requires plants that are more tolerant to sunlight



PLANTS were judiciously selected to draw attention to the house's positive features such as the porch.

Crowning one's home with landscaping

INOS employed pocket gardens that complement the house.

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

WHEN MAY PALILIO decided to build their dream house in Nueva Ecija, she and her husband Val decided to make it a little more imposing. They set it atop a 4-meter-high mound in the middle of their 5,000-square-meter property.

"You could say it's a house on a hill. Considering our place here in San Pascual, Talavera is surrounded by endless ricefields and very few trees, we decided that an elevated house would allow us to appreciate our surroundings from a new perspective," May explained.

The spouses also decided a landscaping work is needed to complete the house and got young landscape artist Lorenz Inos Jr. who is well known for his soft-landscape style and designs inspired by nature.

Something simple

"The couple wanted something simple so I decided for a landscaping design that would not compete (in attention) with the house. The best strategy is to judiciously choose plants that would draw attention to positive features, such as the house's spacious porch," Inos explained.

Since the Palilio property is very open, Inos selected plants that would be more tolerant to sunlight including Phoenix palm, bromeliads, Fukean tea, curly fern, sanseviera and foxtail.

"Well-chosen plants can help provide a safe and fun environment for family outdoor activities," said Inos who sources his plants from a family-owned production nursery in Cabanatuan City and a garden center in Talavera.

Value of landscaping

Indeed, Inos admitted that more and more homeowners are now realizing the value of landscaping.

"After a hard day at the office, just staring at your lawn can be the means to relieve stress. Indeed, installing and maintaining a well-landscaped yard is an investment of time and money, but one will find both are well spent," said Inos, who took over the landscaping business started by his father in the 1980s.

He added that a well-designed, installed and maintained landscape can do wonders for any home and its occupants.

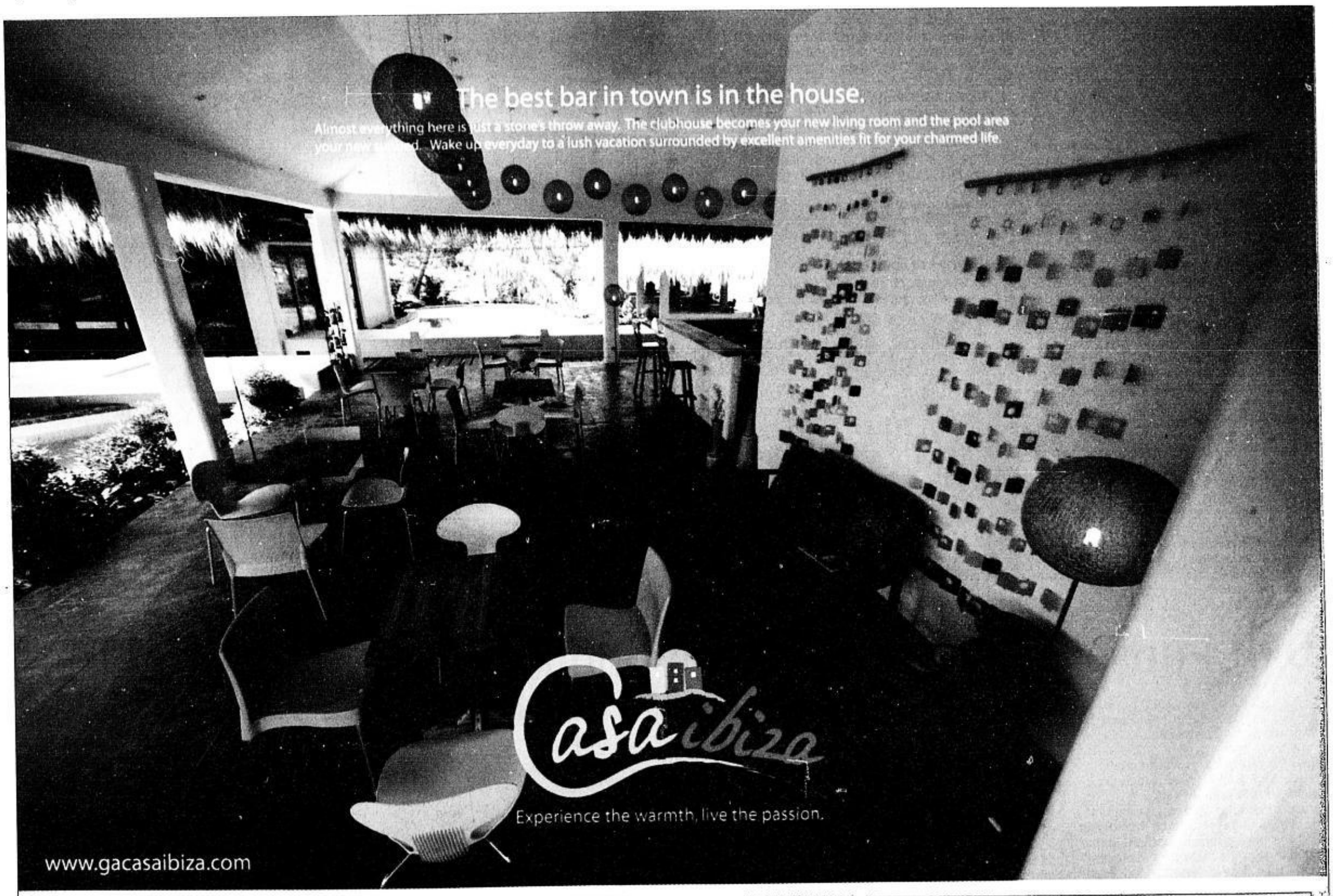
Best area

For May, her favorite would be to just sit on the porch where she could while away her time (sometimes with her children) enjoying the garden as well as anything that passes by the highway that is just in front of their property.

"The family would not have any problem with the noise coming from the highway since the trees and shrubs lining up the property provide a natural barrier, absorbing the noise and thus, giving them privacy," Inos said.

He admitted that landscaping involves much more than placing trees, shrubs and other plants on the property.

"It is an art which deals with conscious arrangement or organization of outdoor space for human satisfaction and enjoyment," he said.



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sea to Believe

Raymond Gutierrez's life of luxury page C2

Tim Yap swims with sharks in Palau page E1

Raya Manangquil goes Bali high page F1

Tals Diaz channels the new 'Heroes' page D2

G Tongi lands on the SAG Awards red carpet! page F3

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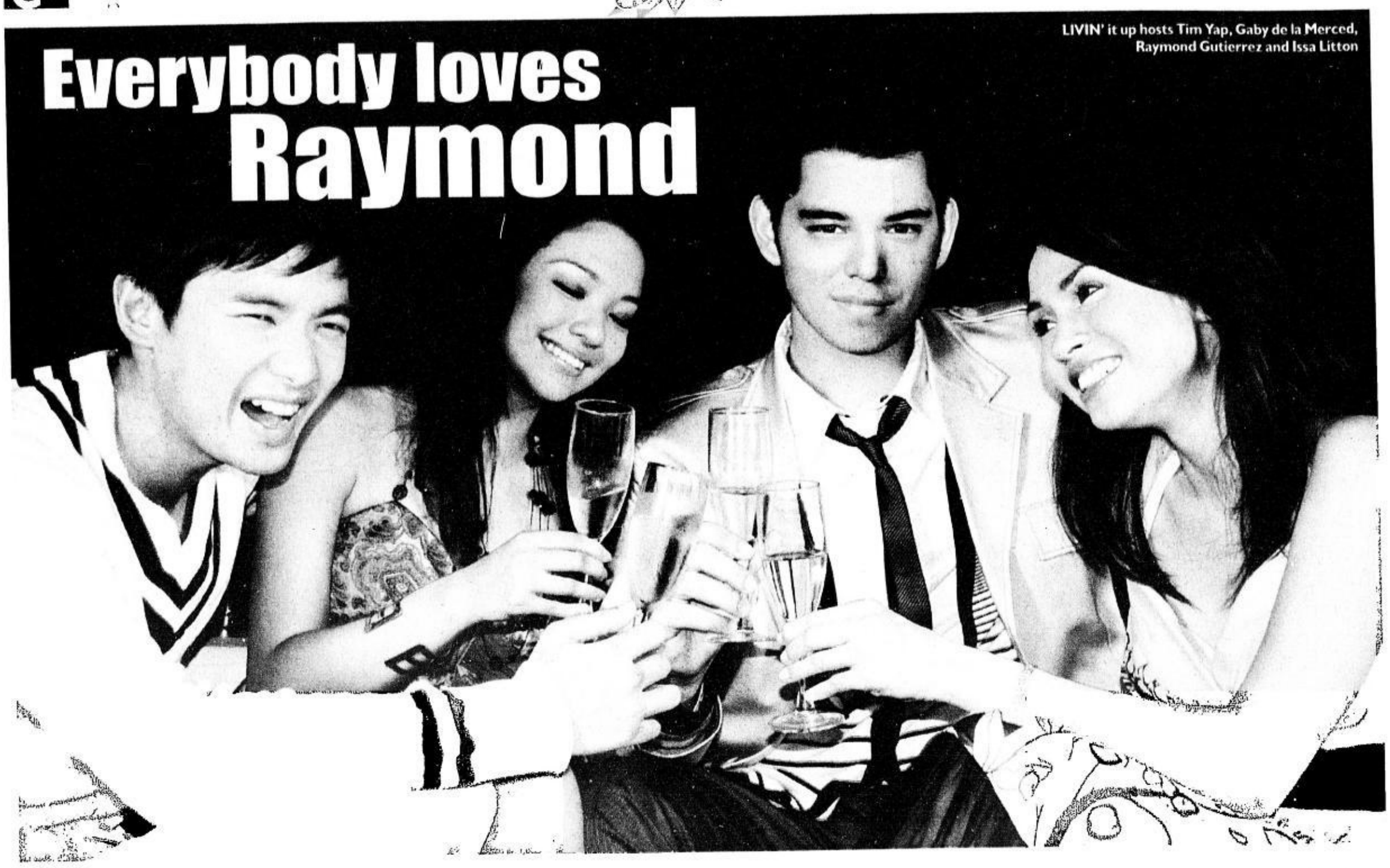


LIVIN' it up hosts Tim Yap, Gaby de la Merced, Raymond Gutierrez and Issa Litton

By Paolo Lorenzana

HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO get too close. Or at least that's how he comes off. The slightly blank canvas the public has seen only until recently can be considered proof that Raymond Gutierrez could have done without all of this. He could have been cruising through his last year in the university route while clinging to an above-average job somewhere in the creative field. Advertising, maybe. Or "something to do with art." Not lounging in the creamy opulence of Embassy Cuisine past 10PM, sipping a glass of vino with Tim Yap while picking out the very same pictures you'll see in this spread.

If you're free to dream and money was no object, how would your life be?

But then who are we kidding here? The family that's in the limelight together stays together and the Gutierrez clan is more than one that occasionally dabbles in acting; or noontime variety shows-or controversy. It's an unconquerable fortress of influence in the local entertainment industry-Annabelle, its stalwart matriarch; Eddie, the silver screen old-timer; Ruffa, the perennial muse, and of course, Richard-its golden boy. And somewhere around the time his identical twin brother was starting to feed the furnace of teen idolatry via the ever-hot coals of the "love team," Raymond was ambling contentedly along in the limbo of celebrity ambiguity. Sure, he's been brushing that public canvas with notable hosting stints here and there, but he's still someone you haven't completely warmed up to.

Dream Catcher

Still, what Raymond's done for SOP or Starstruck can't really compare to the reflective consumerist bonanza that is "Livin' it Up," a gem in the new lineup of quasi-lifestyle shows that have reincarnated GMA's sister QTV into the sophisticated, more manicured channel. "Pretty much, we show people what it's like to live that kind of lifestyle," he explains of the show (which airs today March 17 at 5:30pm), the stem of his wine glass between his fingers. "If you're free to dream and money was no object, how would your life be? It's an aspirational show."

What's more, it's Raymond's stab at declaring 'I am host'-and 'I am not my brother's keeper'; the people at QualiTV being prescient enough to recognize that the nightclubbing, more urbane of the twins was a natural candidate for the job. It knew that-along with co-hosts Gaby de la Merced taking care of the Porsches, Ferraris and life in the fast lane; Issa Litton clutching the modern mom viewership and, surprise-surprise, Tim Yap as the show's indefatigable nightlife correspondent in a segment called Tim Time-Raymond would be the perfect guy to ask 'if you had P 250-million, what would you do with it?' "When [QTV] offered [Livin' it Up] to me, I was really happy 'cause it was different material. I like the show 'cause I get involved with it-what we should feature, where we should go. It excites me because I always come up with ideas-like, 'oh, this'd be nice'. I have a lot to say, that's why I enjoy it."

Saving Private Raymond

The show provides that cushy seat in television where Raymond can be in control-like suggesting a feature on regaled furniture revolutionary Kenneth Cobonpue, and where, like his other hosting jobs, the one-way rapport of disclosure keeps him at distance and retains the mystery that he clings to ever so tightly-something he was able to savor as a college student in the States. "Living there had its perks kasi people don't judge you and people don't care there. They get really wild there. Here, you have to know your limitations because you're in the public eye. You might not go into this business thinking 'oh, I want to be a role model', but regardless, people are watching you and sizing you up. Some people look up to you, some people say negative things about you," he says. "But there's also that percentage in you that says 'would I really let that stop me from having fun with my friends and going out?' Then again, here, everything matters. You have to be more careful."

And maybe that's a good thing. The mystery allows people to exercise their 'what ifs', especially when they see him gallivanting across the nightscape dressed in Details-worthy threads, flanked by his matinee idol brother and their trendy troupe of 'it' girls. It allows people to wonder where he goes, what he's doing and who he is; who Raymond is within his fortress, on the luxury liner he's steering-or wherever his show's 60 minutes and that imaginary P 250-mil takes him. Or us.

LIVIN' IT UP's premiere episode airs today 5:30 p.m. on QTV. From left to right: Hosts Tim, Gaby, Raymond and Issa

Photography: Charles Lu of WildBunch
Styling by: Reggie Cruz
Grooming: Jigs Mayuga of L'Oreal Paris
Hair: Vianney Guese
for L'Oreal Paris Studio Line
Shot on location: Subic Bay Yacht Club
Special thanks to Johnny Valdez

Vedo Vibes

AT 27, PORTUGUESE DECK maestro Marc Vedo is a DJ with a distinguished pedigree of experience under his belt. A couple of years ago, MixMag – the world's top-selling club culture magazine – dubbed him as "the next Sasha." This brag-worthy tag has quickly made him a steady mainstay in the competitive global dance circuit.

Having risen from the South West of England, he's gone on to become one of the UK's biggest exports, playing for such events as Godskitchen, Cream, Gatecrasher, Avalon, and Ministry of Sound. His trademark trance sets fuse rolling tribal beats with the more melodic elements of trance, which gradually get tougher as the set progresses. His uplifting house sets, on the other hand, consist of funky driven beats blended with a lively twist of disco.

On Saturday, March 24, DJ Marc Vedo headlines the much-awaited Slinky: TransAtlantik event at the World Trade Center, which will also feature a fashion show by Folded&Hung. It will be Vedo's second visit to Manila. He was in town last May 2005 for the Koolwaters Asian Tour with Boy George. Pre-selling tickets (P500) are available at all Folded&Hung, Music One, Odyssey, O Music, and Gold's Gym outlets. Call 632-7762 and 634-8238.

Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

More Super! 24/7 events:

Mar. 17, Saturday

Velvet Underground w/ The Late Isabel at Mag:net Café; Lani Misalucha at Araneta Coliseum; Sugarfree, Happy Meals, and Cambio at Saguijo; Urbandub, Dicta License, Typecast, Hilera, The Ambassadors, and Out of Body Special at Club O (formerly Dish); Spanish Cheese & Cuisine at Instituto Cervantes; DJs Karl Ty & Marie Garcia at Fiamma; Tribo Manila at Mezze; Cynthia Alexander at Conspiracy; Love Hopes Concert w/ The Bloomfields at The Covenarium; Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; Rouge at M Café; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; DJ Scratchmark at Prince of Jaipur; Coffeebreak Island at 310 Bar

Mar. 18, Sunday

Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Greenbelt; Concertino at Azzurro Linden Suites; Repertory Philippines' Gay Birds at Onstage, Greenbelt 1; Jazz Sunday Brunch at M Café; Champagne Buffet Lunch at Paseo Uno

Mar. 19, Monday

Heat the Floor: Ballroom Night at Club O (formerly Dish); Dale Ibay at Conspiracy; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; Happy Mondays w/ Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; Retro Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites

Mar. 20, Tuesday

Nyko Maca + Playground at Our Father's Coffee (Taft); Pedicab at Saguijo; The Bloomfields at Strumm's; Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine; 80s & 90s Night w/ DJ Jeff at Temple; Piano Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites; Rica Arambulo at Makati Shangri-La Lobby

Mar. 21, Wednesday

Sound, Chilitees & Itchyworms at Mag:net Café; Keep on Dancing w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Mezze; Dejavu 90s Night w/ DJ David Ardiente at Coquina; W Wednesdays w/ DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; The Bloomfields at Eastwood City; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Stereo Therapy at Embassy VIP Room; DJs Kimozave & Chrismyx at Prince of Jaipur;

Mar. 22, Thursday

Brown Suggah Soul w/ Jermaine Brown (Toronto) at M Café; Join The Club & Chubibo at Saguijo; Monthly Eye Ball Party at Bed; La Luna Loca w/ Tribo Manila at Mezze; Fluxxe: Whatever Thursdays at Absinth; Radio Coquina at Coquina; Cooky Chua & Lynn Sherman at Conspiracy; Reggae Mistress at Café Havana Greenbelt; Coffeebreak Island at Dapo; Rica Arambulo at Makati Shangri-La

Mar. 23, Friday

Philippine Idol: Final 12 Concert at Araneta Coliseum; Ayala Malls Summer Opener w/ Nyko Maca + Playground at Greenbelt 4; The Bloomfields at Eastwood City; Indie-Glow at The Room Upstairs featuring Mozzie and Soft Pillow Kisses (The Room Upstairs is at the second floor of LRI Business Plaza, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel Air, Makati City, Philippines . Visit www.theroomupstairs.com.ph); Banfi Super Tuscan Wine-Dinner at The Tivoli; Joey Ayala at Conspiracy; Cynthia Alexander at Mag:net Café; Sala Ibiza w/ DJ Karl Ty at Nuvo; Latin Connection at Piedra; DJ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; DJ Tony Pavia at Mezze; House Sessions at Fiamma; DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; Jive w/ DJs Darrel & McDash at Temple; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; DJs Scratchmark & Bcal at Prince of Jaipur; House@Home w/ DJ David Ardiente & guest DJs at Coquina

Anvaya Cove: Where mountains meet the sea

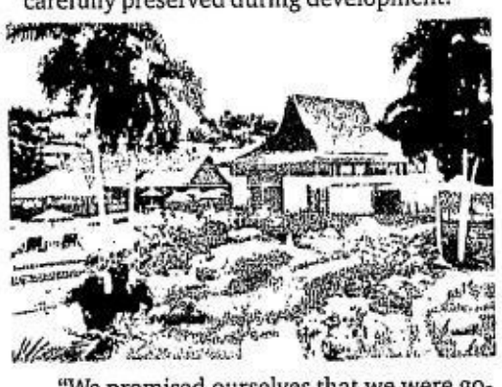
By Joy Angelica Subido

Guided by the light of the moon glimmering faintly on the water, the sea turtles make their way to shore. They crawl inland to where the tides cannot reach and begin to dig in the sand. The swooshing and thumping sounds that their flippers make are similar to the sounds of dried leaves and twigs vigorously brushing or hitting the ground. They dig until the cavities in the sand are deep enough. These are the nests where the turtles will lay their eggs. Eventually, hundreds of soft-shelled, ping-pong-ball-sized spheres fall from the turtles' bodies into their individual nests. Egg-laying done, the turtles cover their eggs with loose sand. Afterwards, they head back towards the ocean and swim away without waiting to see what will happen to their eggs. They will not be back until breeding season beckons them to the same shores again.

Under the warm sand, the eggs hatch. The baby turtles scramble out of their nests and head towards the ocean. If they are lucky enough to escape their predators, they will grow to adulthood there. And uncannily, when it is their time to breed they will find their way back to the place where they were first hatched. For them, the shoreline of the place called Anvaya Cove will always be home.

What will become of the turtles when man and development reach their domain? "We have instituted rules to see to it that they aren't disturbed," says Marivic Anonuevo, senior vice president for Ayala Land Premier. "We have trained our guards to see to it that no one bothers the nests."

Anvaya Cove is the private leisure retreat being developed by Ayala Land Premier. Located 20 minutes away from the Subic Bay Freeport, it is a sprawling 320-hectare development that provides a stunning view of the Silangin and Bataan mountain ranges and the calm waters of Subic Bay. Apart from 3.5 kilometers of coastline, the property includes forests and orchards that were carefully preserved during development.



"We promised ourselves that we were going to respect the topography of the land and we avoided cutting down trees," says Anonuevo. There is a continuous survey to document the flora and fauna found in the area, and the company has partnered with the Worldwide Fund for Nature to ensure that the turtles or pawikan that regularly visit the shoreline will continue to thrive.

"The whole vision of Anvaya Cove is to develop a place where families can bond together in an interactive natural setting where the mountains meet the sea," says Marivic Anonuevo. With 60 percent of the area to be left untouched, the development promises to be an ecological oasis where wildlife is allowed to flourish. Family members have the option to engage in nature experiences through diving and snorkeling in the blue water of the ocean, or trekking and mountain biking through forest trails. There will be a lagoon for fishing, kayaking and pedal boats, and Nature Camp will serve both as camping site and summer camp where children will learn the importance of nature conservation.

For those who would rather stay close to the comforts and amenities of modern living, there is the Beach and Nature Club. Beachside barbecues at the Pawikan Beach Bar and Grille, buffet lunches at Bamboo Café, spa massages under tropical foliage and tall, cool drinks at the Tower Bar are equally tempting alternatives. "There is something for everyone of any age," says Anonuevo. "At the Welcome Pavilion, the staff will gladly plan out your holiday for you."

Currently, there are three neighborhoods being developed: The Cliffside, The Mango Grove and Wood Park. The theme at Anvaya Cove is "Asian Tropical" and an Architectural Compliance Committee is in place to make sure that lot owners abide by the theme. "We have strict guidelines," says Anonuevo. "We want a fenceless community and where necessary, cyclone wire must be covered by hedging or greens." In addition, setbacks of five to six meters are required so that each home will have a lawn.

Anvaya means family in the ancient language of Sanskrit, and at Anvaya Cove the family is priority. In that verdant, natural setting, they have the space to reinforce their love for each other through the happiness of shared experiences. However, by embarking on a nature-friendly manner of property development, Anvaya takes on a bigger scope. In this case, the meaning of "family" has been expanded to include other living beings that consider the area their home.

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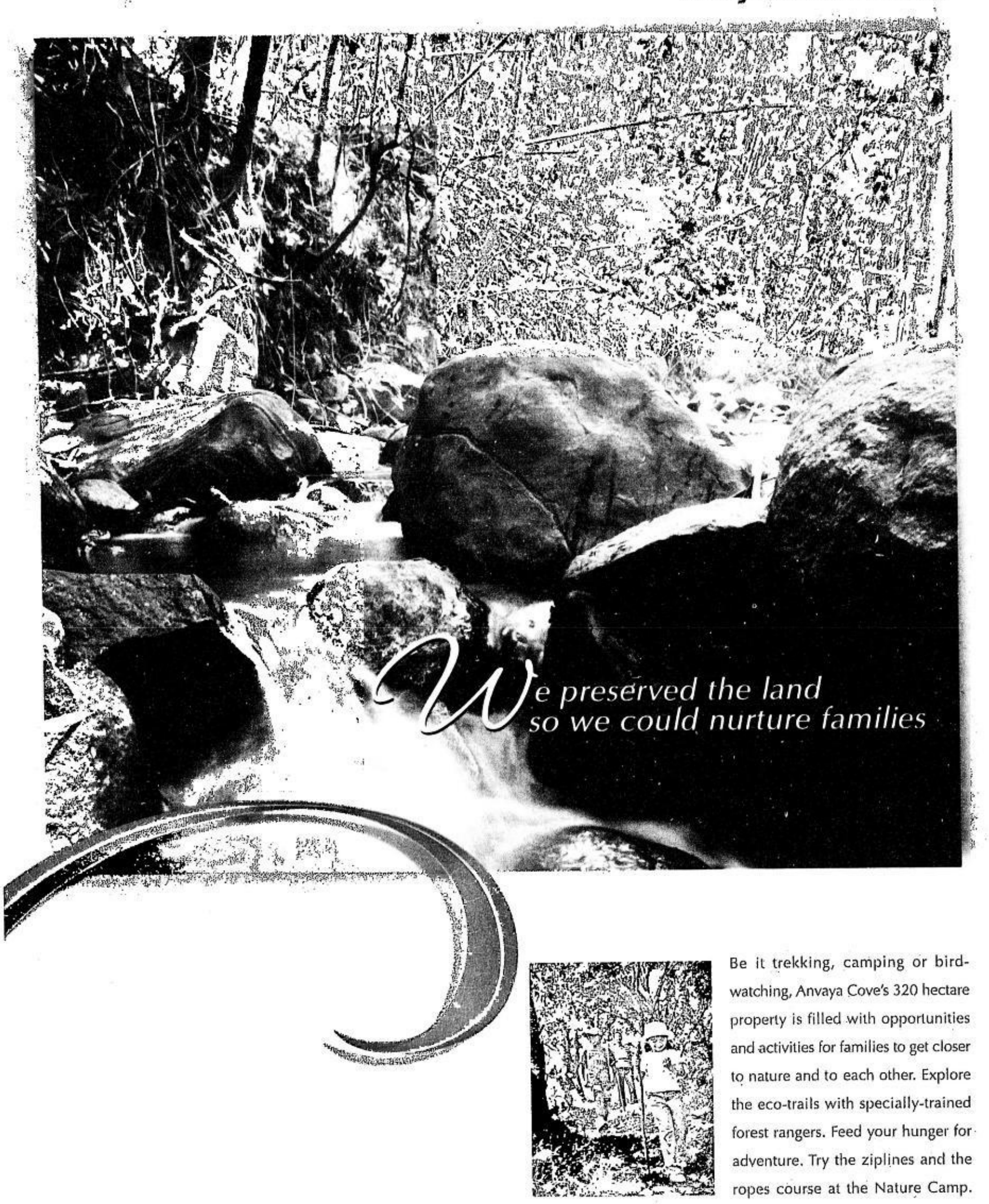
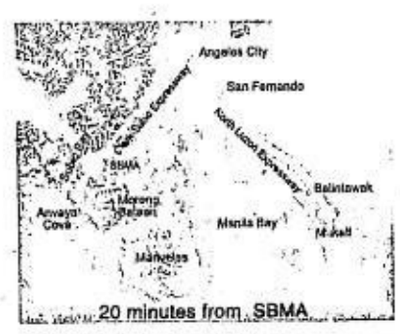


Be it trekking, camping or bird-watching, Anvaya Cove's 320 hectare property is filled with opportunities and activities for families to get closer to nature and to each other. Explore the eco-trails with specially-trained forest rangers. Feed your hunger for adventure. Try the ziplines and the ropes course at the Nature Camp. Meanwhile, your children can enjoy learning more about nature at the Discovery Classroom or playing in the nature playground and kiddy obstacle course. You'll find so many venues to make memories with your family–which is no surprise since Anvaya Cove's lush grounds were specifically designed to make family ties stronger.



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MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Fred Borromeo

ELEGANT AS EVER. Eddie Yap

MOUTON MAVEN. Queen of the vineyards Tita Meneses Trillo

GATHERING OF GOURMANDS. Don Ado Escudero at the Chaine dinner

SEAL OF APPROVAL. The Chaine des Rotţisseurs

SIPPING PRETTY. Joey Mead loves the Super! good life

MAN OF HONOR. Mike Toledo

MICHEL Lhuillier welcomes you

Gastronomics and audiophiles, unite!

By Tim Yap
Photos by Aldwin Aspillera

"THIS IS AS CLOSE AS WE CAN GET TO HAVing an authentic medieval feast," declared **Fred Borromeo** at the grand dinner to introduce the new members of the Chaine des Rotisseurs—the most elite wining and dining association all over the world.

Having the Chaine des Rotisseurs badge is akin to receiving the highest honors in food and beverage appreciation.

Inside the Rizal ballroom C of the Makati Shangri-la was a community of connoisseurs as **Michel Lhuillier** welcomed the members and newly appointed officers. Among the well anointed, I spotted **Tita Trillo, Mike Toledo, Charlie** and **Chinit Rufino, Nick** and **Lucille Locsin, Eddie** and **Dellie Yap, Don Ado Escudero** with **Becky Garcia** and **Cory Quirino**.

If that Monday was a gustatory delight, then the weekend before that was an auditory surprise, as Manila was treated to a musical serving of Tortured Souls. MTV Philippines and Nokia, along with DJ and promoter **Jason Soong**, fresh from New York brought in this trio from New York to give us their fresh blend of jazzy electronica.

Thursday prior to their sassy set, Jason took the trio on a private yacht and did a quick island hop. Friday night was a quick skip at Piedra before their NBC Tent gig, which was filled to the floor with hipsters hopping to joyful, Tortured music.

With choices like these, who said Manila was devoid of flavors? Take your party pick.

NOKIA country general manager William Hamilton Whyte with wife, Angelique

NOKIA corporate communications manager Nikka Abes with MTV VJ Anne Curtis

NOKIA marketing head Sandeep Khana with MTV's Patrick Pacla and NBC's Francis Lumen

MUSIC, mayhem and Tortured Souls

BEA LOCSIN and Juana Manahan

BIANCA Gonzales with Santy Ledesma and Franco Chan jam at the MTV event

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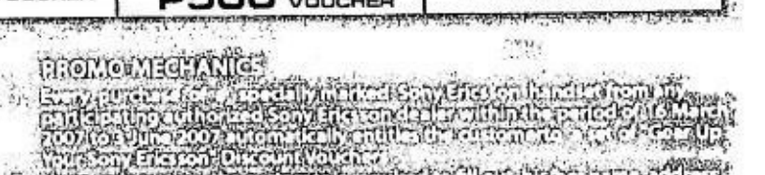
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GREEN JEANS. Levi's Eco organic denim is perfect for high-end treehuggers

Reduce, reuse, recycle redux

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NO-BRAND BRANDING. Stock up on recycled goodies when Muji opens its US flagship store in the New York Times Building late this year

With eco consciousness at an all-time high, the newest new thing is--possibly --conscientious consumption

SHOPOCALYPSE. Designer Anya Hindmarch is doing her share to raise eco awareness with her charity bag, the I Am Not A Plastic Bag

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Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

PICTURE THIS: MOUNT RUSHMORE, Manhattan, and London modestly dunked in water from melted glaciers. Tourist-friendly macaws stand in for pigeons in Venice's Piazza San Marco. Elsewhere, lizards and palm trees turn the Eiffel Tower into a tropical playground. The Great Wall of China, now part of a photogenic sand dune, resembles a half-buried maze. Those future-focused vignettes speak of a world shaped by rising sea levels and global warming. Don't look now, but it's "The Day After Tomorrow" through the eyes of Italian fashion giant Diesel.

The new Diesel advertising campaign, shot by Terry Richardson, is still sexy as hell but in a somewhat disturbing way. By stamping these ironic images with "Global Warming Ready," the company has sashayed into a cultural minefield, disrupting the so-called hush of decorous environmentalism with playful visions of a hip, size 0 dystopia.

Diesel's ads could just be the latest in an issue-oriented marketing monsoon, one that another Italian clothing company, Benetton, perfected two decades ago. Then again, it could also be a genuinely stylish expression of eco awareness, or a combo platter of both.

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So what's yours?

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

I DIDN'T HAVE TO TRAVEL THROUGH time, teleport or see the future to know that "Heroes" would be a hit TV show. (Though it would have been much cooler to say so, hmm.) The hyperpopular series has finally reached our shores via RPN 9 and Crime/Suspense Channel, and it's only 18 episodes behind! Will wonders ever cease?

I confess that I have already seen fifteen episodes, thanks to my superhuman ability to sit on a couch for hours watching marathon downloaded videos, nourished only by Holy Kettle Corn and Coca-Cola. Ahhh, no life can be a good life!

I think of "Heroes" as a cross breed of "Lost" and "X-Men." The show follows the story of several people from different parts of the world, who soon discover that they have extraordinary abilities. There's a devoted cop who finds out he can read minds, a sprightly cheerleader who can do a Wolverine by regenerating herself, a geeky-cool Japanese programmer who can travel through time, a sketchy politician who can fly, and a heroin addict who can paint the future. At some point, these characters interconnect and realize they have a higher destiny to fulfill—they need to save the world from mass destruction.

In less than a year since it premiered, "Heroes" already racked up a slew of honors and awards. It was nominated by the Writers Guild of America as the Best New Series of 2007, it scored Golden Globe nominations, and won as the Favorite New TV Drama at the 2007 People's Choice Awards. The cast of "Heroes" was also highlighted in the "People Who Mattered" feature of Time magazine's Person of the Year issue at the close of 2006.

This show totally has my vote. I think it's the best thing to ever happen on TV since "The Twilight Zone." In fact, at the start of each show, there is a Twilight Zone moment that poses philosophical queries, like are we entering a gateway to evolution? Are we all extraordinary in some way or another, and we have a higher destiny to fulfill?

I believe a big part of the appeal is the idea of average people discovering that they're not so average after all. It has cooked up conversation entreés among fellow "Heroes" groupies, as to what superpowers each person has. (Mine is the ability to mind-control children, and to imbibe five bottles of red wine without toppling over.) The characters, in spite of their newfound abilities, still face their everyday problems and responsibilities, like marriage failures, job dissatisfaction, unpaid bills, and perhaps the worst crisis of all, teenage angst. Well, applying classic Spidey sensibilities here, with great power comes great responsibility.

So imagine what would happen if one day we'd wake up and discover that we had a new power while going about our regular scheduled programmed lives? What if your alarm clock screeches in the morning and then you suddenly stop time to catch more precious zzz's? Or what if you get up the nerve to ask your boss for a raise and he agrees without question, because you have the ability to control people's minds? Or what if you go to a party and wonder why no one's talking to you, because you've turned invisible ... right, that explains it. In those mundane moments that are all part of being human, those powers do come in handy. Allow me to let my imagination run wild and take the cue from these Heroes, and how their special skill can make everyday life just a bit more extraordinary.

Imagine what would happen if you woke up one day with a superhuman ability? Thanks to 'Heroes,' we can fantasize about it

SUPERHEROES minus the spandex tights

I NEED A HERO!

Claire Bennet (Hayden Panettiere)

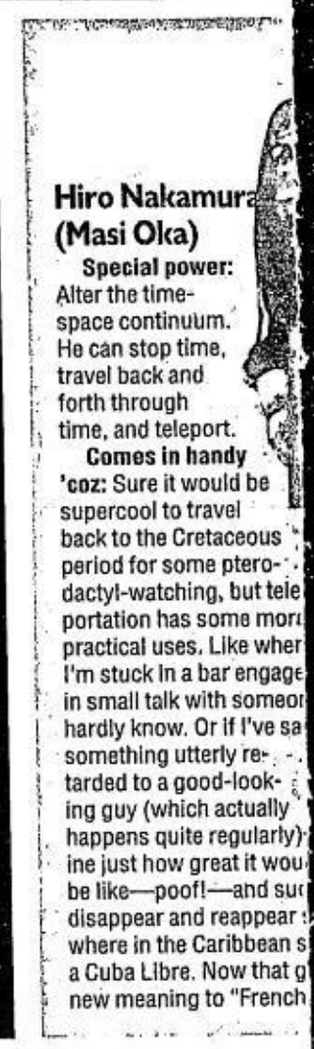
Special power: Regeneration. She can heal herself from all injury.

Comes in handy 'coz: Fear is not a factor, ever! There would be no reason not to try sky diving, bungee jumping, extreme surfing, or scuba diving with Great White sharks, since you'll just snap your broken neck back into place or regenerate your chewed off leg.

Isaac Mendez (Santiago Cabrera)

Special power: Precognition: He can paint the future when he's drugged up.

Comes in handy 'coz: Divining winning lottery numbers, predicting trends two seasons away, getting into the fortunetelling service—all these will prove to be lucrative opportunities that would make full use of your power. And since you know when you're going to die or when Armageddon is happening, you might as well get filthy rich and enjoy the remaining days of your life.



Hiro Nakamura (Masi Oka)

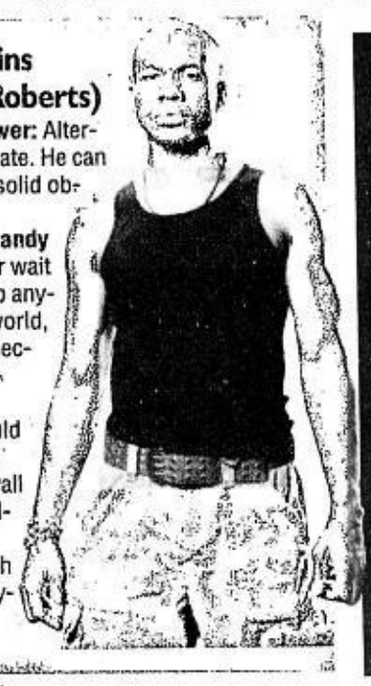
Special power: Alter the time-space continuum. He can stop time, travel back and forth through time, and teleport.

Comes in handy 'coz: Sure it would be supercool to travel back to the Cretaceous period for some pterodactyl-watching, but teleportation has some more practical uses. Like when I'm stuck in a bar engaged in small talk with someone I hardly know. Or if I've said something utterly retarded to a good-looking guy (which actually happens quite regularly)—imagine just how great it would be like—poof!—and suddenly disappear and reappear somewhere in the Caribbean sipping a Cuba Libre. Now that gives new meaning to "French

D.L. Hawkins (Leonard Roberts)

Special power: Altering physical state. He can pass through solid objects.

Comes in handy 'coz: Why ever wait in line at a club anywhere in the world, only to risk rejection by the appointed Door Nazi? You could simply phase through the wall or an unguarded door, and groove on with the hard-partying set!



Niki Sanders (Ali Larter)

Special power: Alter with incredible strength, she's stressed, her killer Jessica surfaces.

Comes in handy 'coz: ing an ass-kicking evil tw could be dangerous to a evil taxi drivers who thin rule this city. I could sim leash her to punish cab who refuse to take you t intended destination bec it's out of their way. My twin's sniper skills would be of use to assassinate candidates running for t ate this year. Very Machi lian, but she'll save the c try!

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Matt Parkman (Greg Grunberg)

Special power: Telepathy. He can read other people's minds.

Comes in handy 'coz: Dating would be soooo much easier if you could just cut out the uninterested parties and go for the sure bets. Then again, everyone becomes too predictable too soon.

Peter Petrelli (Milo Ventimiglia)

Special power: Empathy. He can absorb the powers of others within his immediate vicinity.

Comes in handy 'coz: By absorbing the power of a mind-reader, we could mentally converse, eliminating the use of chatting and instant messaging in the office. A bitching session won't need to be carried out in whispers or behind closed doors ever again.

Nathan Petrelli (Adrian Pasdar)

Special power: Flight.

Comes in handy 'coz: You'll never ever have to go through mind-numbing Manila traffic again!

Micah Sanders (Noah Gray-Cabey)

Special power: Technopath. He can control machines and electronic gadgets.

Comes in handy 'coz: In this age of YouTube, Yahoo messenger, SMS and the iPod, having this power means you're practically God.

Ronald opens his doors to the Mc kitchen

FOR THE FIRST TIME HERE IN THE PHILIPpines, McDonald's opened its world-class kitchens to the public through Open Doors Program to spread to all consumers—especially to moms—that each McDonald's meal is thoughtfully made, using only the freshest ingredients, under the best and most caring conditions.

The first sneak peek in Ronald's kitchen were attended by celebrity moms Maritoni Fernandez, Yayo Aguila and Cheska Diaz, as well as fashion retailer Ruby Gan, television host Chiqui Roa-Puno, and sportscaster/host Shaan Bermudez-Hizon. The interesting tour took place in four main preparation areas—the Fries station, Chicken station, Burger station, and Salad station.

This very successful program which was first implemented in China and Australia showed the public how each McDonald's kitchen is kept under lock by the four key words Quality, Service, Cleanliness and Value (QSC&V). QSC&V is what brings consistency in all McDonald's products, and it is this consistency that has made McDonald's one of the most loved and trusted brands in the world.

"QUALITY is our style," says McPresident Kenneth Yang

"This is when QSC & V really matters. It helps us bring order in what we do and consistency in all our products. When it comes to quality, we at McDonald's never leave anything to chance," says McDonald's President Kenneth Yang. "We make sure to give them the proper training and we check every single step from market to the store," he proudly added.

McDonald's promise of food safety and quality were demonstrated at the Open Doors Program reflecting the brand's role as parenting partner and ally in providing products that even the most discerning consumers can trust within an atmosphere of security.

McDonald's VP for Marketing Margot Torres adds, "Opening our kitchens reinforces our openness and transparency. Moms can feel at ease knowing that they are giving their children and the rest of their family only the freshest and best quality meals."

Last February 25, 14 branches nationwide participated in the program, namely: McDonald's Laoag, Lepanto, Quezon Avenue, Strata, Governor Forbes, Las Piñas, Sucat Palanyag, Osmena Cebu, Cebu North Road, Binondo, Bacolod Lacson, CSI Lucao Pangasinan, Olongapo-Gapan Road, and SM Sta. Rosa.

MCWAY. This is how they do it.

RONALD with McMommas Yayo Aguila, Jackie Lou Blanco, Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Maritoni Fernandez and Cindy Yang

Marlboro
BRINGS YOU THE HIPPEST BEATS WITH M PARTY!

Every so often, Manila's placid nightscape of ordinary events and routine parties experiences an earth-shaking shift of global proportions; that one night becomes the standard for all other nights, which can only pale in comparison.

This is one such night.

On March 17, 2007 (Saturday), from 10 p.m. onwards ***Marlboro***, the no. 1 cigarette brand in the world, will bring you an exclusive, by invitation only event packed with great music, flowing drinks and an energy-filled crowd. "We feel that the vigor and dynamism of an **M** party is fitting to the spirit of ***Marlboro***. With the ***Marlboro*** **M** parties, we feel that ***Marlboro*** is showcasing its standing as the pioneer in bringing the most exciting gigs in town," describes ***Marlboro*** Promotions Supervisor Angela De Vera.

Grammy award-winning duo Deep Dish [Dubfire + Sharam] will be spinning during this **M** party at the hottest night spot in town Warehouse 135 on Yakal Street, Makati City. The opportunity to see one or the other of this mixmaster duo is in itself an extraordinary experience; to see them playing together on this side of the pond is, without exaggeration, once-in-a-lifetime. Local talent Kevin Ruiz opens. Intentionally raising the bar for the chicest in club chic, Angela De Vera continues, "Only ***Marlboro*** can bring a ground-breaking event of this caliber to Manila!"

The city will pulse with incendiary beats at the **M** party as Manila's finest flock to party and dance the night away. Though the same sun will set and the same moon will rise over Manila's partyscape, we know that after this, nights will never be the same again!

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous
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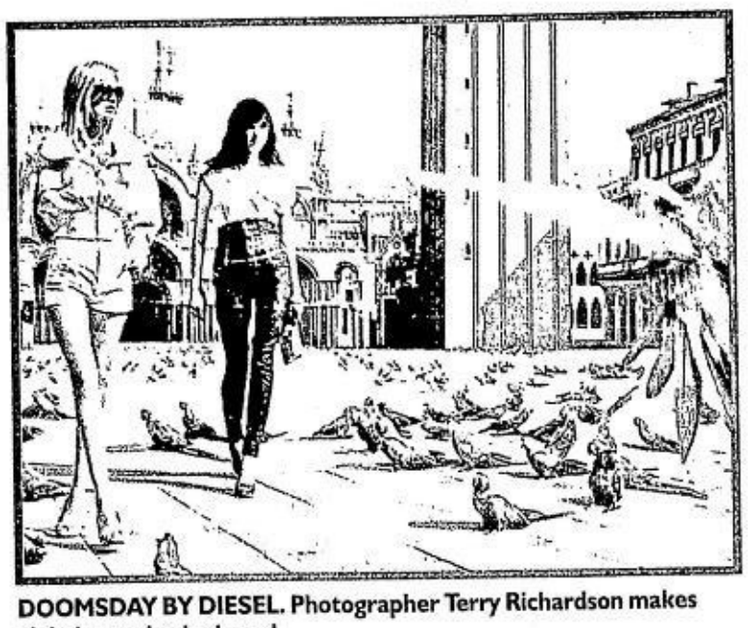

DOOMSDAY BY DIESEL. Photographer Terry Richardson makes global warming look cool

From page D1

Whatever the case may be, one thing is for certain: Shopping "Captain Planet"-style has become increasingly popular. Is global warming the new cool? Is guilt the new black? Almost certainly. Think of it as Shopocalypse Now.

Shift in thought

In the Spring 2007 supplement to Time Magazine, Kristina Zimbalist writes that the shift in thought and attitude is more conscientious than conspicuous. It's a seemingly hypnotized choreography that "promises to infiltrate all levels of consumerism and design...to the tune of billions and billions of dollars."

The same article quotes Chris Sanderson, co-founder of trend-forecasting firm, the Future Laboratory. Sanderson says that we are moving "out of a period of bling-or-bust spending" into a "more reflective phase of consumption."

ECOMAGINATION. "The Day After Tomorrow" through the eyes of Diesel

Unlike the hippie movement of the 60s, however, this eco bandwagon is not made of muesli or fueled by decades-old bong water. In fact, some would rather not call it a bandwagon at all. "It's not just austerity as an aesthetic. It's a way of life," Sanderson tells Time Magazine.

Goodbye gaudy, hello restrained

In May 2006, Belgian designer Raf Simons spoke to i-D Magazine about his debut collection for Jil Sander and said that trying to come and shock was out of date. A year later, a similar opinion has handclasped his visionary pronouncement.

As Kate Betts states in, again, Time Magazine, fashion is dialing it down. She cites Julie Gilhart, fashion director of Barneys New York, who observes that excessiveness is not so cool anymore. By all accounts, it appears that the right thing to do now is to make an about-face from obvious status clothing and accessories-trashion, a.k.a. trashy fashion-and go totally eco.

Haute do-gooder

These days, even fashion folk seem to be craving authenticity and unashamedly embracing their inner treehugger, their haute do-gooder. Even if it's just for this season, which Mother Earth hopes is not, letting your eco flag fly is the right thing to do.

Outposts from both ends of the style spectrum have been getting their eco on. On the one hand, mass retail faves H&M should have already stocked their UK stores with a new organic cotton fashion range by this time. H&M's biggest UK rival, TopShop, has also been selling vintage and recycled clothing for sometime now. TopShop, too, has launched ethical jewelry collections and worked with eco-aware clothing labels such as People Tree.

Across the ocean, no-brand brand Muji will open its first ever US flagship in the New York Times Building in time for the holidays. The environmentally friendly Japanese store is set to lease 5,000 square feet, making it the retail centerpiece in the Renzo Piano-designed skyscraper. Manhattan's urban ecosystem will finally have its fill of Muji's recycled cardboard desktop speakers and their multihued recycled waste cotton tees come Christmas-time.

Organically yours

Speaking of, American Apparel, the thinking man's Gap, also hawks t-shirts made of organic cotton. Their sweatshop-free gear goes perfectly with dozens of organic denim brands that use chemical-free dyes, like Rogan Gregory's Loomstate, Welsh brand Howies, and even Levi's. Levi Strauss & Co., who created the world's first pair of blue jeans in 1873, has launched a new brand called Levi's Eco. Levi's organic cotton jeans, available in all their U.S. and Europe stores, are upmarket and pricey, but are pretty comparable to other gourmet jeans today.

On the other hand, It bag designer Anya Hindmarch has used haute couture's lofty platform to help change the polluting habits of the man, or woman, on the street. She follows up her first charity handbag-the Be A Bag-with a roomy and re-usable canvas shopping bag. The limited edition I Am Not A Plastic Bag has, not surprisingly, already sold out. About doing her share to raise consumer conscientiousness, she says, "You can make it cool to do the right thing."

Celebrity treehuggers

You don't need to be an ivory tower academic to realize that going green is getting glamorous. Admittedly, this Captain Crunchy movement has gotten a slight boost from some solar-powered eco-stars.

Aside from Prius-driving Cameron Diaz and Leonardo diCaprio, a dude by the name of Orlando Bloom has apparently been a long-time advocate of green thinking; Mr. Bloom was a huge part of Global Cool, a celebrity-driven campaign to fight global warming. He has talked about a new home he is building in London, which, he claimed, would be as green as he could make it.

In addition, former US veep Al Gore can now add Oscar winner to his résumé, thanks to his recent pro-Earth docu, "An Inconvenient Truth." Not to be outdone is Bush-Lauren Bush that is. The niece of President Bush is working on a new organic lifestyle brand, not as a designer but as its spokeswoman. The first piece made its debut at the Michael Kors show during the Mercedes Benz Fashion Week in New York City. Bush has been photographed carrying a burlap shoulder bag that read, "Feed the Children of the World." She hopes that sales of the "Feed Bag," on sale on Amazon.com in April, will help feed a child in school for a year through the United Nations World Food Program.

Sustainable style

Despite its ubiquity, adopting babies from poor countries isn't the only way to get instant eco gratification. You can now go clubbing with a conscience as well. Opening next year in Rotterdam, Club Double Dee looks to be the world's first sustainable club. Imagine glow-stick-wielding dancers supplying all the electric juice via an energy-generating floor and you've gotten what their responsible hedonism will be all about.

If you want to show you care through art, carpool your way to the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. From March 11 - June 17, 2007, contemporary artists such as The Yes Men, Jay Critchley, and even the late Andy Warhol himself will present the multi-media showcase, "6 Billion Perps Held Hostage: Artists Address Global Warming."

A little ecomagination

In "High-Water Marketing," research mentioned by the Washington Post's Libby Copeland reveals that the youth care about brands doing good, that we look for fairly tangible and superficial signs-extensions, if you will-of this do-goodness. Because of that, skeptics say that companies are merely capitalizing on whatever disease, tragedy, or cause is hot at the moment-whether it's AIDS, breast cancer, African children-all in an effort to make the sale.

The very notion of a company like Diesel spoofing global warming may look crass, but at least it made more people-young people-aware of the issue at hand. Besides, a little ecomagination never hurts. See, on a deeper level, trend or no trend, it's really about time we got it together and treated the environment better. Why not do it in style?

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Palau

...first the beach and then you dive...

Tim Yap

Photos by Kevin Davidson

EVERY PLACE claims to be the "eighth wonder of the world," but just recently, I channeled my inner Jacques Costeau, threw away all my vices and learned how to dive—all in the pursuit of *the* eighth wonder of wonders, the Palau archipelago.

I have heard so many tales about the idyllic islands that don Micronesia's crown jewel so I made a mental note to make sure to visit its fabled waters. My own journey towards Palau was a bit more process-oriented than usual. For most, all it takes is a two-way ticket from Asian Spirit through Davao and voila! Palau here I come! And go down deeper.

But first, I had to secure my PADI dive certificate from Djila Weinbrenner and Luis Claver III from Scuba World in Boracay. (I even got a perfect score for my written exams—*yipee*! The practical one, under water, is another story.) Weeks

LIFE/E2

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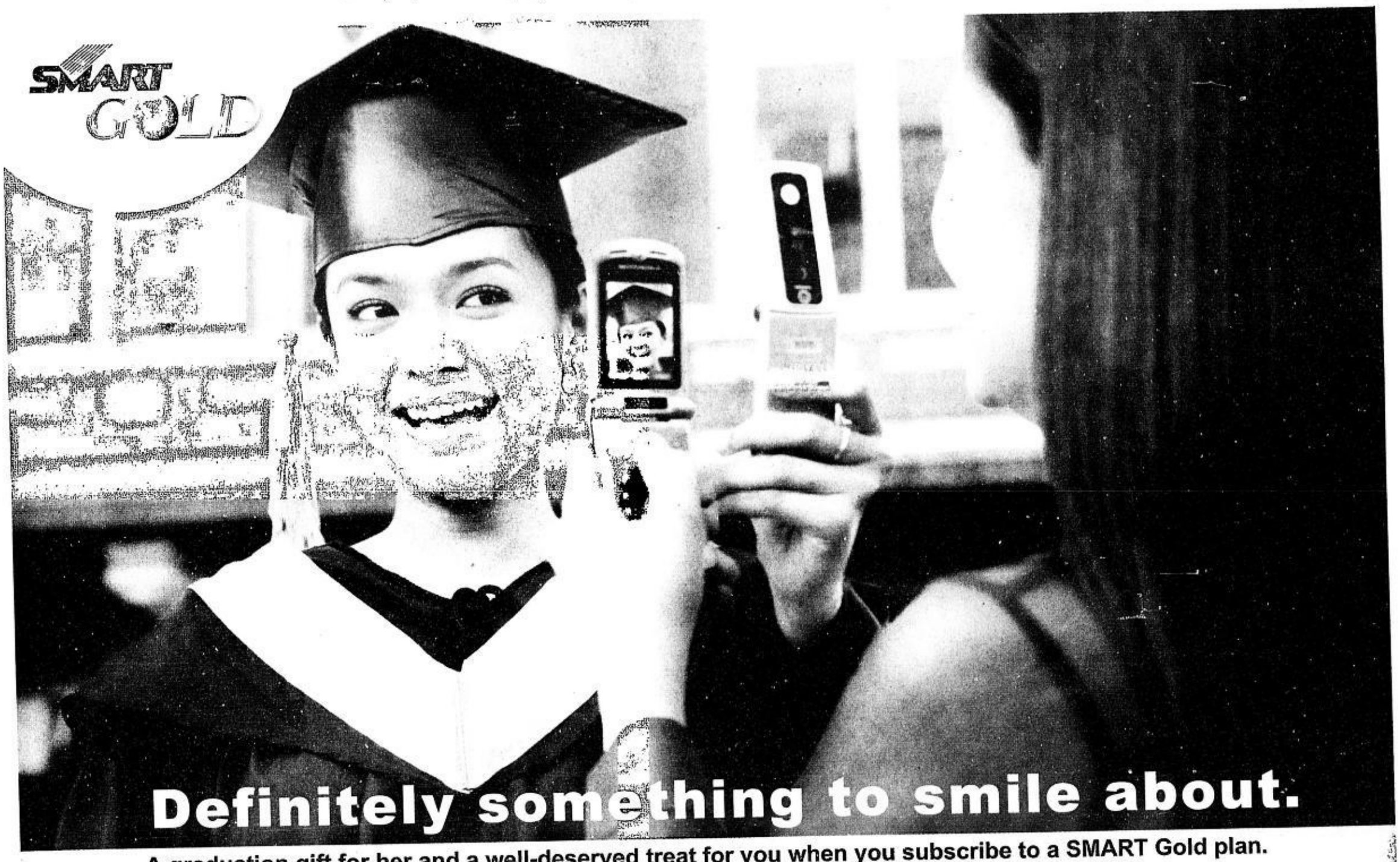

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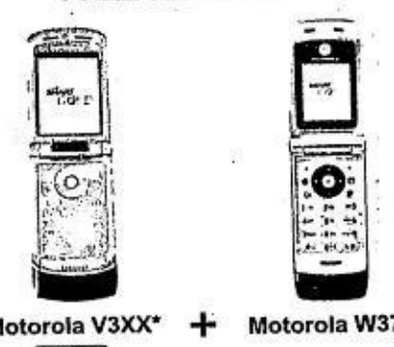

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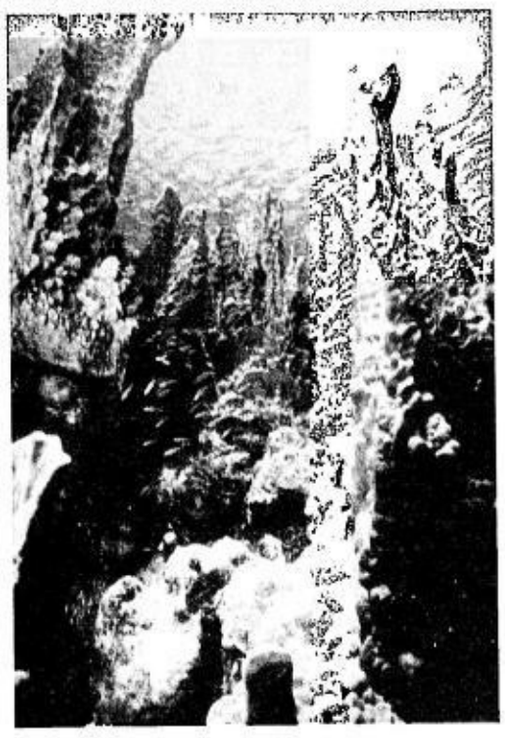
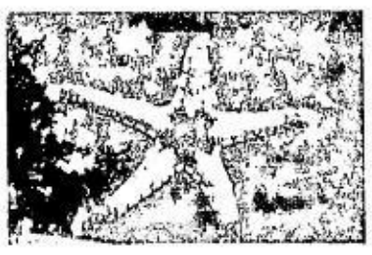
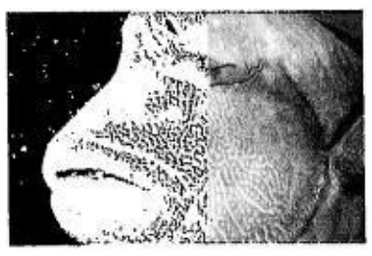
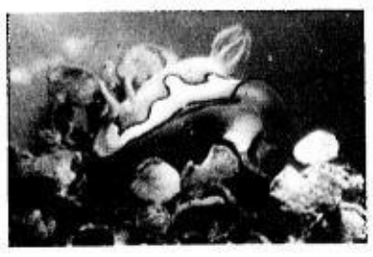
Promo runs until April 30, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0878. Series of 2007

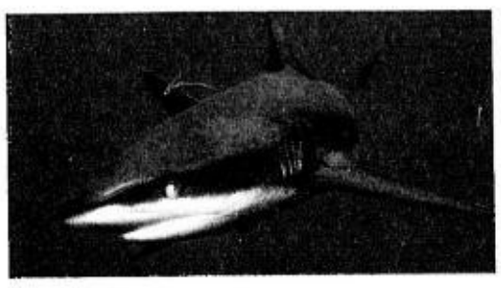
SUPER! ASIAN SPIRIT PALAU GETAWAY GALLERY



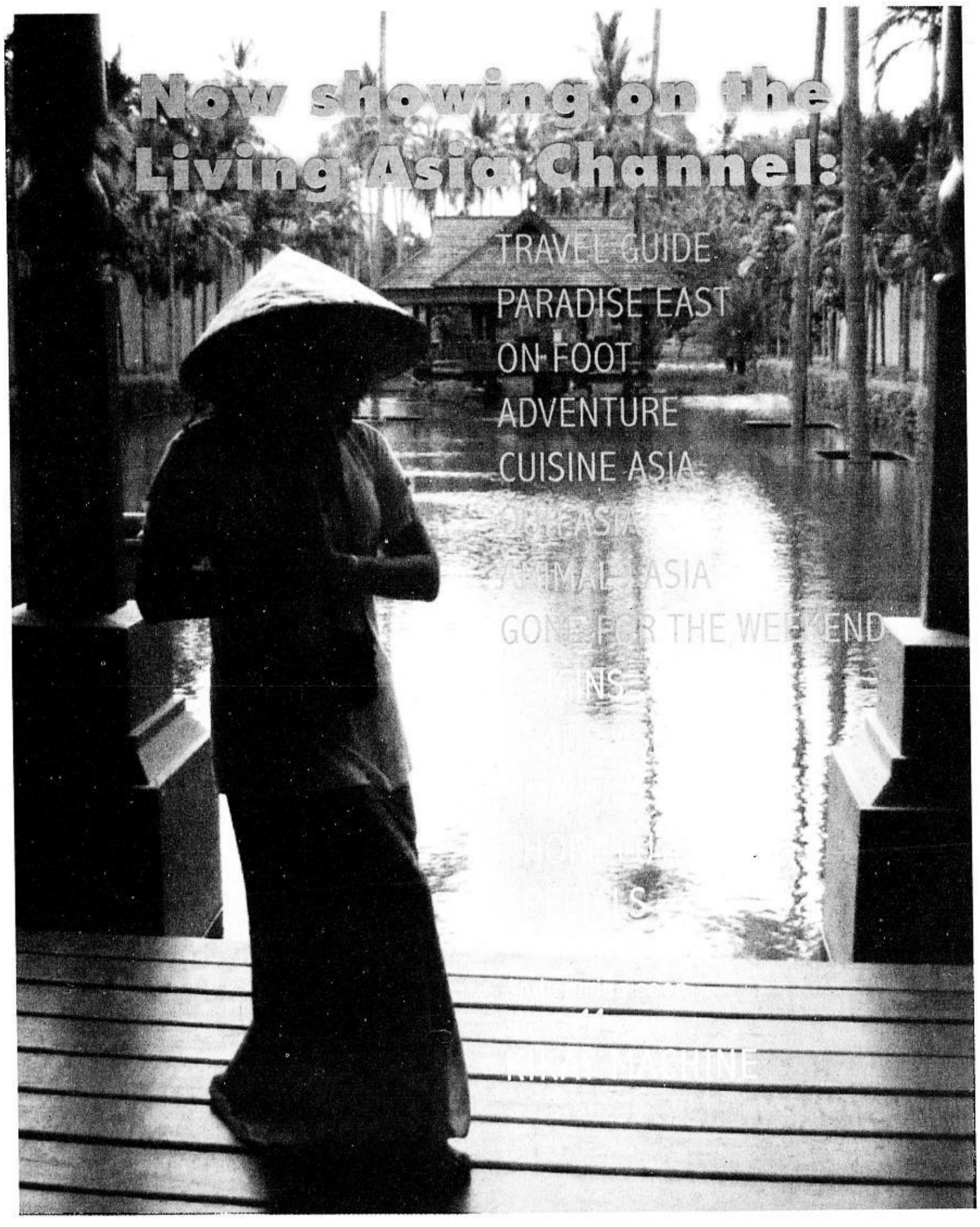








MOTHER NATURE'S WORKS OF ART. Palau's beauty has inspired a sea of marine life photographers like Kevin Davidson (photos on this page) and our very own Gutsy Tuason and Jon Jon Rufino. Discover Palau through Asian Spirit, call 855-3333. Sam's Tours Palau contact Dermot Keane or Aireen Torres at (680)+4881062. Palau Pacific Resort at (680) 4881606/1601 or check out their website at www.panpacific.com



From page E1

before my Asian Spirit-Palau adventure, I went on a cleansing "no vice" diet and ate healthy food (that is subjective)—I had to be fully prepared for paradise.

There was something magical in the air as I took my first few steps on Palauan soil. Alighting from the Asian Spirit aircraft, I was greeted by a bright, full moon, the very symbol of Palau that is emblazoned on their national flag. I took that as a very hospitable "welcome to our country!" from the gods over and under the waters of pulsating Palau.

A total eclipse clouded the sky that same night, a glorious Sunday at the Palau Pacific Resort—a Pan Pacfic Hotel property, a place that might as well call itself an Aman, with its own five star amenities and service, friendly (and oh-so-Pinoy) staff and white sand beach front space that stretches from here to eternity.

Portraits of Pinoy paradise

Palau has a population of 20,000 people—5,000 of which are Pinoy. Geographically, Palau is located between the Philippines and Guam. Historically, Palau's old name was Belau, Los Palaos, (Wow!) New Philippines and Pelew Island. The Spanish called it the Caroline Islands until the Germans renamed it Palau. Oh yes, she's been around the block, but she's still very much a virgin.

Looking around, they could have retained the name "New Philippines." From the waitress to the dive master to the hotel receptionist and the tour supervisor, this was a Pinoy dollar earners' wonderland! I felt right at home with our *kababayan*'s warmth and natural hospitality—they were all hungry for news about home. A lot of them were even asking me who to vote for this coming elections. *Boom Tarat Tarat*!

From the island's shores I would do what most Pinoy bloggers do—take photos of myself! Early mornings would take me snorkeling around the island right before the pick up by Sam's Tours—Palau's premier dive center-cum-everything—at 8:30 a.m. They arrange dive tours, island hops, photo services, meal options—anything and everything that would make your Palau dive more unforgettable.

It's not just down the depths that make Palau mystical. Even on shallow waters one can snorkel vibrant coral reefs with a kaleidoscopic marine life or hike through tropical rainforests. Visit hidden marine lakes and fascinating natural wonders. Kayak around the islands. Play with jellyfish that don't sting in Jellyfish Lake. Or hie off to the nearby islands of Yap—yup! You read that right. Being in Palau is like being inside The A.C.—The Aquarium Channel.

Switching from one channel to another, I took the Sam's Tours boat and breezed through Discovery Channel mainstays—the Rock Islands, the German Channel, among countless other spots that Mother Nature has blessed Palau with.

Live and let dive

Life's a beach and then you dive. I was with a group of American retirees, a British couple based in Australia and some Spanish *hombres* on a dive out. They fell in love with Palau's pristine waters teeming with untouched marine life. I suited up with my dive gear and took the plunge.

Splash! A back roll and the world changed. My breathing was the only thing I could hear. Bubbles were the only thing I could see. Slowly, the curtain of bubbles disappeared as my neoprened self descended on the legendary

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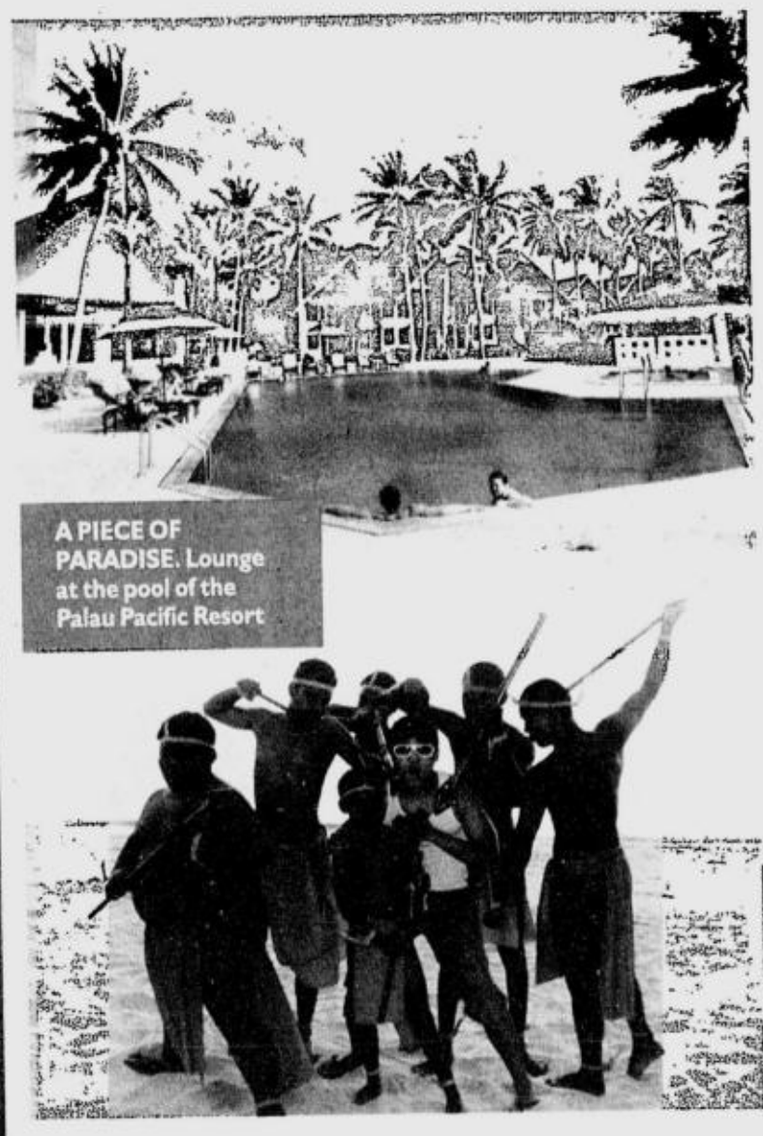
PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

beach you dive...

SWIM with jellyfish that don't sting at the Jellyfish Lake



A PIECE OF PARADISE. Lounge at the pool of the Palau Pacific Resort

GUILTY! Tim Yap captured by the native warriors

MAN-MADE FORMATIONS. A Palauan carving creation.

WHITE HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JUNGLE. The Republic's new Capital in Melekeok State.

REST AND RELAXATION ALONG THE BEACH. The villas at Palau Pacific Resort

WATER SPORTS. Kayaking is another option

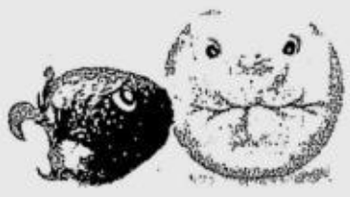
BAI is their traditional Palauan meeting house

MICRONESIAN CULTURE. The Eqthon Museum shows you the real thing

PINOY dive masters Dante Frank

Ave Del Arroz of Solomons Tours, Palau

Marine buddy JR



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waters. Suddenly, this hallucinogenic swirl of colors came rushing into my sight. Schools of fish, more like intertwining campuses of finned friends greeted me like their long lost King Neptune.

Look at this stuff! Isn't it neat? Wouldn't you think my summer collection's complete? I wanted to belt out "Under the Sea" but then all of a sudden, my dive buddy Daniel hand-signalled that sharks were looming about. Fade out "Little Mermaid," enter "Jaws" soundtrack.

Others would have freaked out, but not me. I've been around sharks my whole life! Palau is shark territory, and that's the main attraction here. Instead of drowning in fear, I embraced the Zen-like atmosphere underwater, and cooly swam past a school of sharks, awestruck by their fierce beauty.

Upon surfacing after an aquatic mind trip, I almost forgot that I had legs, and not fins. As if that visual odyssey wasn't enough, I looked up and saw a double rainbow! They say that at the end of a rainbow you'll find a pot of gold, then what do you find at the end of a double rainbow?

There's definitely a treasure here.

Deposit now and get a chance to win it

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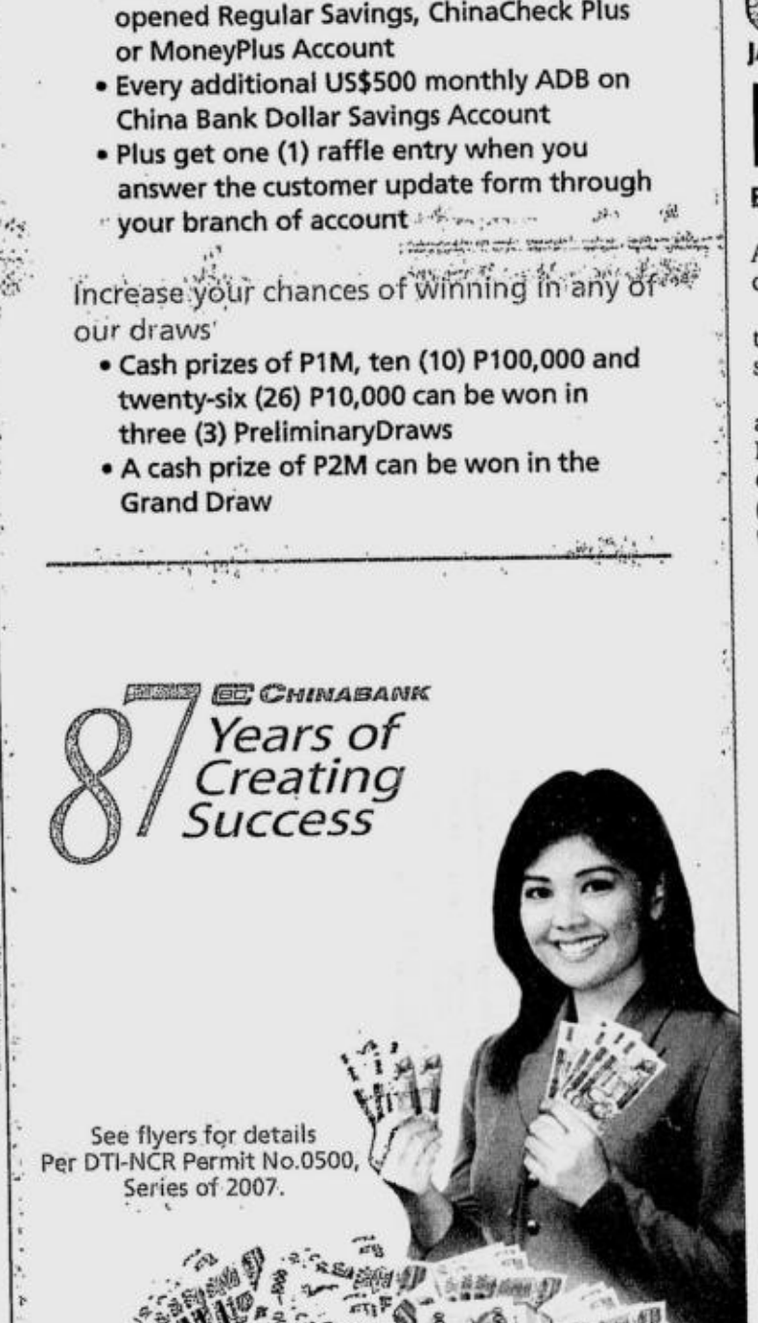

See flyers for details
Per DTI-NCR Permit No.0500, Series of 2007.

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Super!Casting

CENTURY TUNA SUPERBODS 2007

MICO Lara

JAM Lamigo

JAMES Zablan

JULIA Duncan

RAPHAEL Keifer

PATRICIA Ortega

DOROTHY Aragye

JOHN Tiuseco

JOYCE So

JEROME Ortiz

TRICIA Velasco

ALISON Andres

ANDREW Smith

DOMINIQUE Dabao

LARRY Bril

LOTUS van Heddegem

SILVESTER Sagad

KRISTINE Pearl Ladera

JAMIE Diago

JOE VINCE Cañizares

MONALIZA Neuboeck

ALEXANDER Poe

MICA Tuaño

PIERRE Niccolo Fabi

Bodies, buddies and the beach

By Tim Yap

A HUNDRED MODELS, A THOUSAND APPLICants.

This summer, a battle of the bodies will take place in the next few days making the season hot, hot, hotter!

Mark your Super! calendars for March 24 and hop onto FH stores. Yup, Folded and Hung took the basic idea of a model audition, or a "go see" and magnified it to World Trade proportions. Add to that a Big Fish DJ dominated Slinky set, and what do you have? The FH Streetcast Summer Show—the biggest super summer event this side of the city!

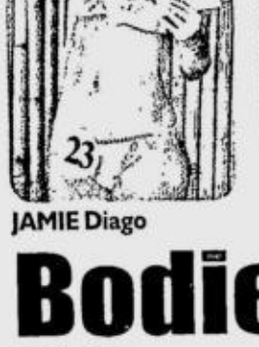
Century Tuna on the other hand, took the commercial casting route and made it into a nationwide search via the Century Tuna Superbods 2007 Grand Finals this coming April 28 at Pier One in Boracay. Put Superfly DJ Karl Ty, celebrities and more naked bodies and summer is sure to work up a Super! sweat. Sweet.

On the F&H show, a hundered stylish individuals will flaunt their FH style. For the Century Tuna Superbods competition, 24 top faces and bodies (plus 6 wild card bets to be chosen on the island of Boracay) will compete to get the disctinction of being the premier tuna brand's next image models, taking home half a million each, plus a one year modeling contract eating tuna and living a healthy lifestyle.

Whew! Super! says let these images inspire you. Don't just salivate. Hit the deck!

Super!Casting

F&H STREETCAST SUMMER SHOW


Lucia, 18

Francis, 22

Jem, 17

Jay, 21

Vanessa, 18

Lei, 19

Phil, 19

Eiyah, 16

Jay, 22

Isa, 19

KGB, 22

Jam, 18

Ronnie, 20

Marco, 23

Dimple, 21

Allan, 24

Mira, 20

Andre, 25

Myell, 21

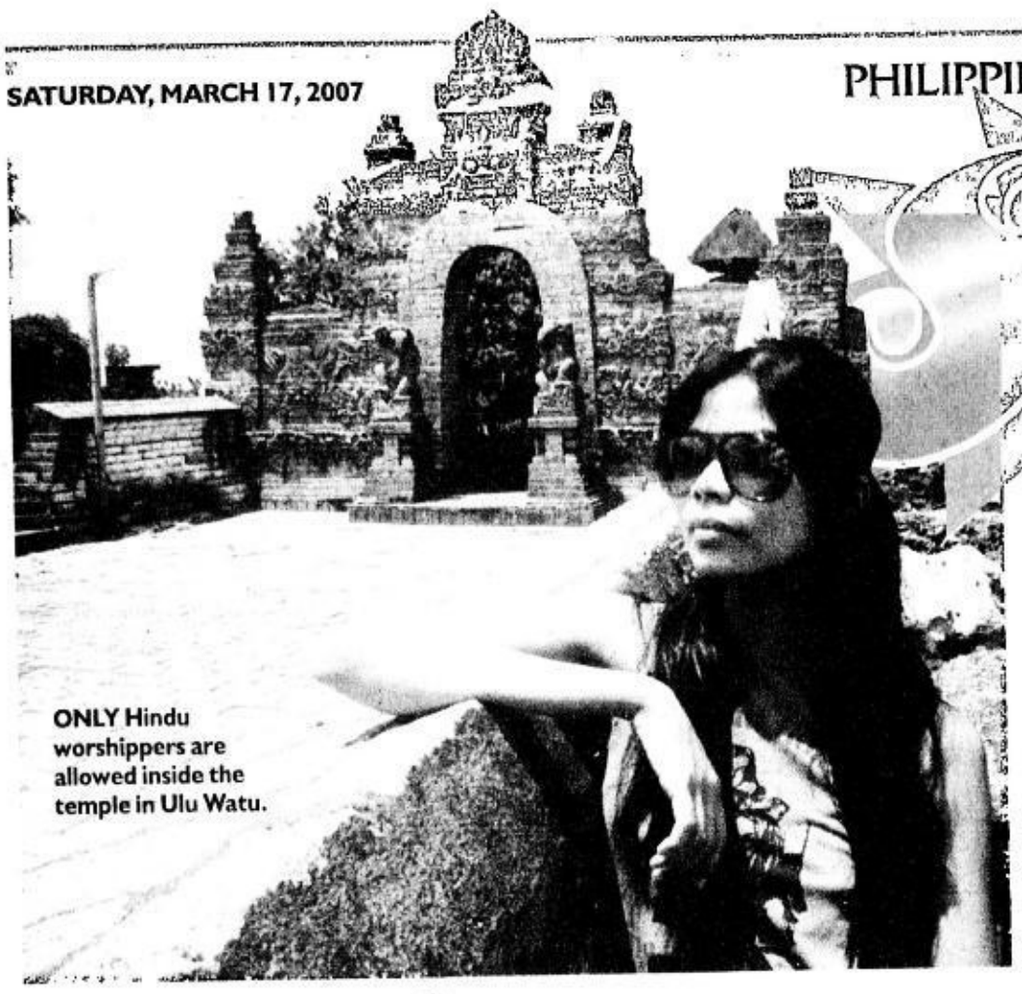
An, 21

Lance, 20

Roan, 19

Carl, 17

Charisse, 22



ONLY Hindu worshippers are allowed inside the temple in Ulu Watu.

Bali high on a low budget

THESE are just a couple of furry little friends you'll be seeing roaming free at the Sacred Monkey Forest.

Beyond the Runway

Raya Mananquil

TRAVELING NEED NOT BE an expensive venture. Just ask backpackers from around the world-Europeans, Australians, Canadians, and even some Japanese and Koreans who choose to go frugal once in a while. If your idea of inexpensive traveling includes staying at your Tito's house in San Diego for accommodations, or saving on luggage is using *balikbayan* boxes, then read on. Filipinos have yet to learn the art of traveling the El Cheapo way.

I admit that this is still a bit of a struggle for me, but I'm slowly learning. On my recent trip to Bali, I have given myself a $500 budget including tickets, accommodation, food, transportation, and yoga classes for a two and a half week stay.

The best way to score cheap tickets is to go online or ask travel agencies for good deals. Lower-priced tickets tend to have a lot of restrictions on them in terms of changing flight dates, refunds, etc. and some budget airlines don't provide meals, which means you have to buy them onboard. If this is the case make sure you pack a meal to go in your carry-on bag.

Before embarking to Bali, my boyfriend Corey told me to pack some towels. "There might not be any towels in our hotel," he said, having been to Bali already. I just shrugged.

"Oh and pack all the toilet paper too."

And that's when I cringed.

Not-so-lonely planet

Arriving at the Denpasar airport, we were met by our driver, who introduced himself as Ketut. Apparently in Bali, Ketut is not exactly a unique name. The traditional Balinese have only four names, according to the order of their birth and regardless of their sex. The first-born is Wayan, followed by Made, third is Nyoman and lastly Ketut. Succeeding children will follow the same set of names according to the same pattern. Try walking down a busy street and yell, "Wayan!," chances are, you'll catch the attention of every other person on the block.

For accommodations, we relied on Corey's best friend James, who had arrived before us. Given our tight budget, he found a place recommended from the Lonely Planet for only $6 a night-no air-conditioning, no hot water, no television, no housekeeping—but that didn't bother me at all (aside from no towels and no toilet paper, of course!). What horrified me upon seeing our room was the bathroom, if you can even call it that. The shower, which was more like a hose with no showerhead, was in the same vicinity as the toilet. With no separation or shower curtain, in other words, you bathe where you sit to pee. You cold see scum forming around the tiles and mold forming around the ring of the toilet bowl. When I dropped my bar of soap on the floor, I had to think twice before using it again. As if that wasn't enough to make me wince, the flush was not working, so Corey actually said, "I think you might have to fish out the toilet paper you used to unclog it!" At that point, I was on the verge of tears. To top it all off, I got bed bugs sleeping there on my first night.

Don't get me wrong, I've stayed in hostels in Spain and Thailand, and gone camping in Australia that provided communal bathrooms, and that was perfectly fine to me because they were actually clean. Let me sleep in the doghouse, just give me a nice toilet and bath. And so, we decided to upgrade to a cottage for $8 a night that still had no perks except for a beautiful garden fronting our front door, and at least it had a proper bathtub and showerhead and a working toilet.

Vegetarian in Bali

The best way to get around town, I've found through experience ,is to do it like the locals do. Forget taxis—in Bali practically everyone drives a motorbike. You can rent one between P125 to P250 a day, depending on your bargaining skills and what type of bike you choose. You can rent cars too for a good price, but the traffic in Bali is almost as bad as Manila's that a speedy motorbike will be a wiser choice. You'll save on fuel too, as a full tank ranges from about P90 to P190.

A warung, translated as a food stall, can mean any-

BALI/ F4

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

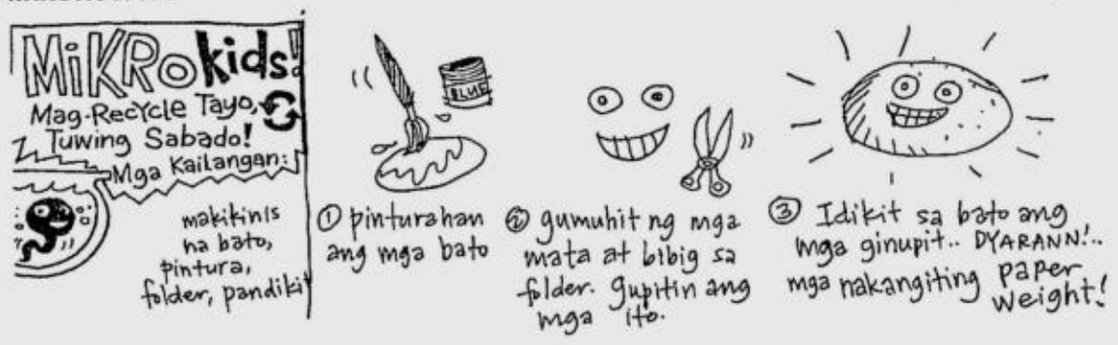
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

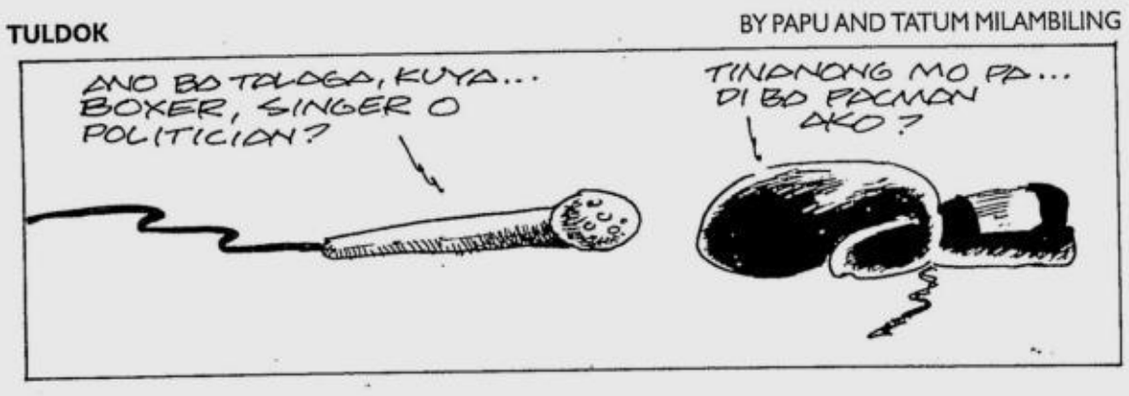
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



TULDOK

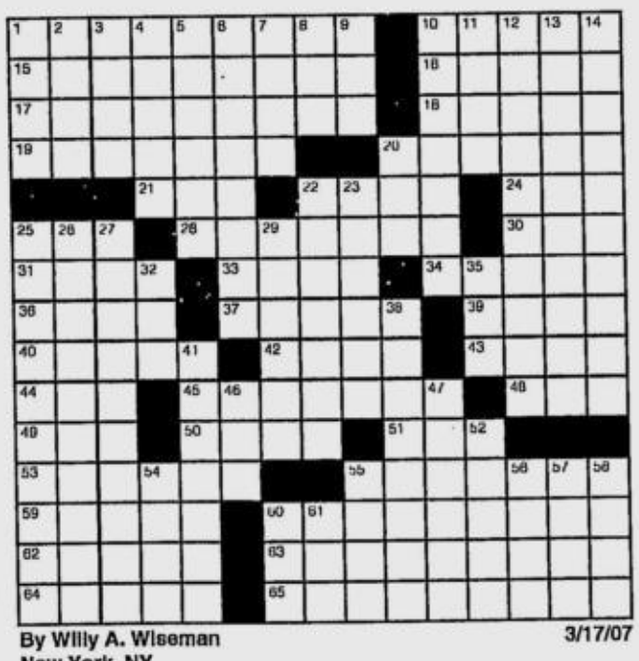
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Willy A. Wiseman
New York, NY

3/17/07

ACROSS
1 Former Tiger slugger Hank
10 Inspiring reverence
15 Like some windows
16 Spanish gentleman
17 Florida snapper?
18 Pan-fry
19 Squatters
20 Mickey's Mouse
21 Yore
22 Fruity quaffs
24 Put on
25 Hood's heater
28 Tempter of Eden
30 T or F, e.g.
31 Came to regret
33 Taylor and Torn
34 Beelzebub
36 Behold, Caesar
37 Goes over the edge
39 Singer McCann
40 Moral standard
42 Wild plum
43 People
44 Diarist Anais
45 Audible dance step
48 Comic Louis
49 Ghostly greeting
50 Tim of "Star Trek: Voyager"
51 Corn serving
53 Relay finisher
55 Came to a point
59 Indonesian island
60 Economy
62 "The Family Circus" cartoonist
63 Door-in-the-ceiling dungeon
64 Girls of Sp.
65 Non-fermented beverages

DOWN
1 Fed
2 Govern
3 Building wings
4 Select group
5 Bruce and Mansell
6 Meals-and-lodging folk
7 Hobbit allies
8 Classic auto
9 Half of Ger., once
10 Lends a hand
11 Disengage from a habit
12 Flood
13 In a speculative manner
14 Nonvenomous slitherer
20 Fellows
22 Dismays
23 Tyrant
25 Bucks
26 Sotheby's employee
27 Government scientist?
29 Removes lather
32 "Agnus __"
35 E.T. from Melmac
38 Erne
41 Dyeing compounds
46 Belg. location
47 Papaya enzyme
52 Find a new tenant for a flat
54 Maui tourist destination
55 Jubilee Line, e.g.
56 Marriage or bar mitzvah
57 James of R&B
58 Indigo and anil
60 Cloud up
61 Play about mech. men

Friday's Puzzle Solved

R	A	J	A	S		S	F	P	D		M	U	S	H
A	P	A	R	T		P	A	R	A		E	N	T	O
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		K	O	U	F	A	X	M	A	C	H	I	N	E
T	D	K		C	O	W				H	Y	P	E	R
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E	V	I	T	A			R	A	M	P		M	R	S
R	E	F	S		C	H	A	O	S		P	O	E	T
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HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly creative and naturally expressive. People love your enthusiasm for life. Many of you gravitate to the arts, especially music, dance and movement of any kind. You have high ideals and often embrace a particular cause. You're attracted to fresh situations and new people. This year, your focus will be on partnerships and close friendships.
Birthdate of: Gary Sinise, actor; Kurt Russell, actor; Rob Lowe, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): In all likelihood, you're dealing with a secret. Or perhaps you're planning something in secret. It might even be a secret purchase or a new job.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The next few weeks are an ideal time to buy wardrobe items, because you like what you see in the mirror. Group gatherings and friendships will blossom now.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Discussions with bosses, parents or authority figures in your life might become more important in the next week or two. Don't be afraid to state your opinion.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is an excellent time to enroll for a course or begin any kind of study or training. It's also the time to explore future travel plans or even take a trip.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might be asked to give your artistic input on a project, no matter what kind of job you have. People know you are creative, and they want your feedback or assistance.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Travel for pleasure will delight you now. You're very keen to learn more about different cultures and places that are entirely new to you. Gaining knowledge is pleasure.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): There's a good chance others will give you gifts or do favors for you in the next few weeks. It appears that the universe owes you a favor now! (Just say thank you.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): The next few weeks are an ideal time to mend broken fences or get cozier with partners and close friends. It's easy to establish give-and-take with others now.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Coworkers will be unusually supportive in the next few weeks. Use this in whatever way you can to accomplish much and promote your own best interests.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Love, romance, parties, sports and playful activities with children are tops on the menu for the next two weeks. Exciting relationships could begin for some.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Get more physical exercise. Family relations are warm and friendly. This is an excellent time to invest in your home or make it more beautiful.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is an excellent time to enter into agreements or sign contracts with others. Time spent with siblings and relatives will also be enjoyable.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

								9
			6	8			5	
		3		7		4		
	3		9					
	4	8				7	1	
					5		2	
		4		6		3		
	7			2	8			
6								

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/17

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	5	6	8	3	4	2	9	1
1	2	3	9	5	7	8	4	6
9	4	8	2	6	1	7	5	3
3	1	2	7	9	8	4	6	5
6	7	9	4	2	5	3	1	8
4	8	5	6	1	3	9	2	7
8	6	7	1	4	9	5	3	2
5	9	1	3	8	2	6	7	4
2	3	4	5	7	6	1	8	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/16

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The long road to the red carpet

By Giselle Tongi

Giselle Tongi shares her SAG Awards experience–from the red carpet and the after-party to the celebs and that glorious goody bag

I MOVED TO NEW YORK IN THE year 2000, at the turn of the millennium with wide eyes and hopeful dreams for crossing over from my success from the islands of the Philippines to the rest of the world. After two years of studying the "method" at Lee Strasberg Theater Institute, I moved to Los Angeles. I have been based in Hollywood for almost four years now. Six years after leaving my homeland, I am proud to say that it is only now that I can say that I am a true professional in the entertainment industry because I am a member of the Screen Actor's Guild, the most distinguished performers union in the world!

First let me tell you a little bit about SAG. The Screen Actor's Guild is the nation's largest labor union representing working actors. Established in 1933, SAG has a rich history in the American labor movement, from standing up to studios in the 1940s to fighting for artists' rights amid the digital revolution sweeping the entertainment industry in the 21st century. With 20 branches nationwide, SAG represents nearly 120,000 working actors in film, television, industrials, commercials, video games, music videos and other new media. The Guild exists to enhance actors' working conditions, compensation and benefits and to be a powerful, unified voice on behalf of artists' rights.

There are several ways to become an SAG member, and in a lot of ways it can be very tedious because of the catch 22. You can not work on a legitimate project unless you are an SAG member, but in order to be a member you must be working on a SAG project. However you can not just "pay" to join. You must be invited or be eligible. Sounds complicated huh? Well, it is! Usually, a lot of actor's do extra work to obtain their SAG cards. You need to be a featured extra (with lines) in order to get a voucher and you need 3 vouchers to become eligible to join. I on the other hand, decided that I would not take that route. Call it pride but I was not going to "schlep" around on the set while some guy on the crew tried to massage my shoulders.. no sir! I decided I would audition for projects that were open to seeing non-union members, with hopes that they would "Taft Hartley" me. Taft Hartley is the term used when they sponsor a non-member on the basis that no one besides them can do the job. And after all these years (six to be exact), I finally landed a role that does just that! Now, my opportunities are so much bigger because I am a SAG member. I can finally audition for the studio pictures and primetime television episodics that I was not able to before. It is indeed a very exciting time in my professional career as an actor.

Red carpet invite

I believe timing has a lot to do with your dreams becoming a reality. "All in God's time", Tita Angeli Valenciano, my manager in Manila always says. Well, 2007 alone has proven to be a very fruitful year already. When I decided to join the SAG Union this year, I also got a special invitation to walk the red carpet at the 13th Annual Screen Actor's Guild. The Entertainment Industry Foundation was throwing the shindig together with People Magazine and it just so happened that my good friend Michael Balaoing works for them. So when he invited me to go with him, I was ecstatic. But then, panic set in as soon as I put the phone down after agreeing to go! Who would I wear? It's not like I can just call Rajo Laurel to whip me something up for the event. There was just no time to FedEx an outfit from Manila. Who would do my hair and makeup? Juan Sarte III to travel halfway across the world was highly unlikely! Alas, every girl's nightmare - nothing to wear and no time to spare! My first red carpet event in Hollywood and I am absolutely at a loss as to how I would pull together my resources for this major event! I managed to get in touch with David Tupaz, a designer I met through Rajo and he let me try a couple of dresses the evening before the awards show. I settled on a sexy metallic gray dress that was sure to turn heads.

The 13th Screen Actor's Guild Awards

My mother-in-law came over early in the morning to watch my daughter Sakura so that I can rush to the salon and get my hair done by two older Thai ladies. I had dreamt very vividly that my look would be very old Hollywood glamour so I went for a classic chignon, simple yet elegant.

When I got home, I immediately started working on my makeup. I took out my Kevyn Aucoin book out for inspiration and to start the transformation. My husband Tim zips me up in a black Venus cut Larry Espinosa gown. I have a collection of gowns that I keep in my wardrobe just for dress-up sessions (the Tupaz gown was not fitting well in the back). Michael arrives a little after 3 p.m. to pick me up.

With all the stretch limos surrounding us, my excitement was really building up. As soon as we set foot at the entrance to the red carpet, the celebrity frenzy started. We were right behind Terri Hatcher and her long aquamarine gown had a trail that was very hard not to step on. Sandra Oh tried to squeeze past us, in her crème strapless gown. Security was strict so everyone, including the A-list celebrities, had to get their purses searched. Every kind of entertainment show - from E to CNN - lined the red carpet. Ryan Seacrest chatted it up between constant makeup retouches. It was pure chaos as we were elbow-to-elbow with all these professional actors that I recognized but did not know by name. Occasionally, a big Hollywood star would cross our paths - and it was hard to believe how human and real they were. Jada Pinket Smith was on Will Smith's arm, adjusting her cleavage right beside me. She is tinier than me but solid as a rock. Kevin Bacon and his wife Closer star Kyra Sedwick gave us a nod, which I thought was very friendly. Then all of a sudden from no where, some people were screaming my name. "G...G...G!" I looked up at the bleachers and lo and behold, this group of pretty filipinas were waving their arms, trying to cath my attention. They were thrilled to see their own at the red carpet. The other people beside them kept looking at me wondering where they had seen me. Michael could not stop laughing when the Pinays started giving me the thumbs-up sign. In the traffic jam of these Hollywood stars, my friend Sthanlee Mirador, the only Filipino photographer/paparazzi to work at high profile Hollywood events (he works for Wire image), was standing in the media bleachers and started snapping away at me. The other members of the media were wondering who I was while I struck a pose. It was very amusing to me.

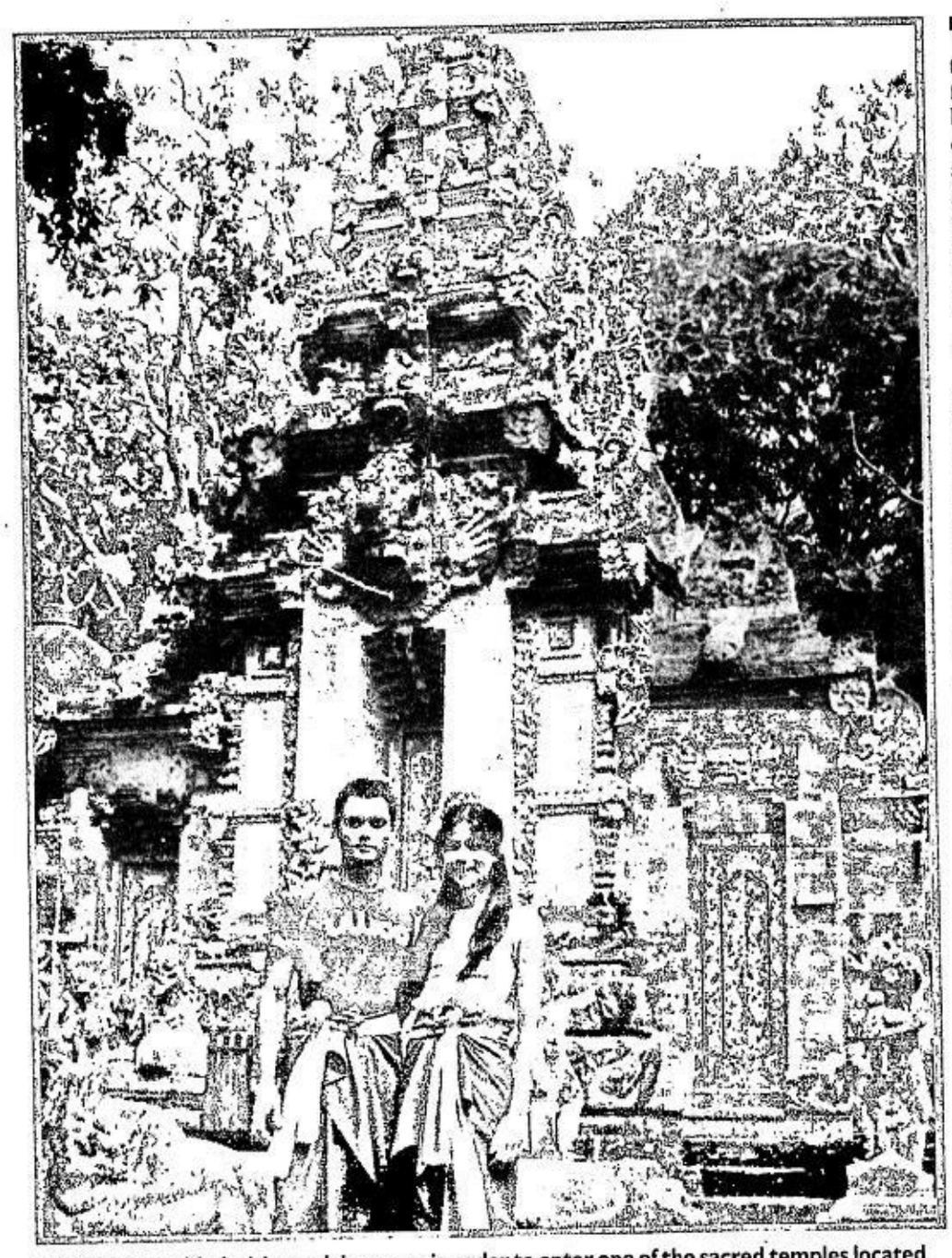
When we reached the end of the carpet, it was time to hit the open bar while waiting for the 13th SAG awards to start. We were minding our own business when Christian Slater stood beside us and we all started to make small talk. Because I know how it feels like for people to be in awe of your work, I decided not to mention how much I loved watching him in Kuffs with Mila Jovovich back in 1992. Then surprisingly Leo Decaprio walked by and I didn't even swoon. I just kept thinking how my husband was just as tall as this legendary Titanic star. We finally sat down to eat. Wine and champagne were constantly offered to us. It was a taped awards show which took forever. In my opnion, the acceptance speeches were the highlight of the show.

The after party and the goody bag

I had been to the SAG after party last year with my girlfriends so this year I wasn't as floored by the beautiful decorations and vast space for all the decadent buffets and dessert tables. In fact, I was quite disappointed that they did not have the ice cream buffet they had last year. Michael and I were able to get a table directly in front of the mini dance floor/stage setup where John Legend would be performing. When John Legend started playing the piano and singing, it was really the icing on the cake, as the evening turned out to be one of the most magical nights I have experienced in Hollywood.

To tell you honestly, the best part about the entire night is grabbing the goody bag before leaving. I have been to many awards nights in Manila, but getting that goody bag alone makes every other award night pale in comparison. Imagine getting a bag that weighs around 20 pounds and is filled with everything from limited edition cosmetics to gift certificates for over a $100 pair of jeans! Yes, the Sag Awards was a treat that I will cherish for a very long time. The work of the winners on stage that evening truly makes me proud to be an actor.

Bali high on a low budget



WE WERE provided with special sarongs in order to enter one of the sacred temples located inside the Sacred Monkey Forest.

From page F1

thing from a side street eatery to a restaurant. Luckily for us, being a vegetarian in Bali is easy. Tempeh or soy bean curd patties are commonly used in Indonesian dishes, from tempeh burgers, tempeh curry, sweet soya tempeh, and tempeh satay. You can buy a viand for as cheap as P7 such and can be completely satisfied with three viands for P25 total with rice. Mid-range warungs are best, because many offer the option of having brown rice and brown bread, and dishes average only for P25 each.

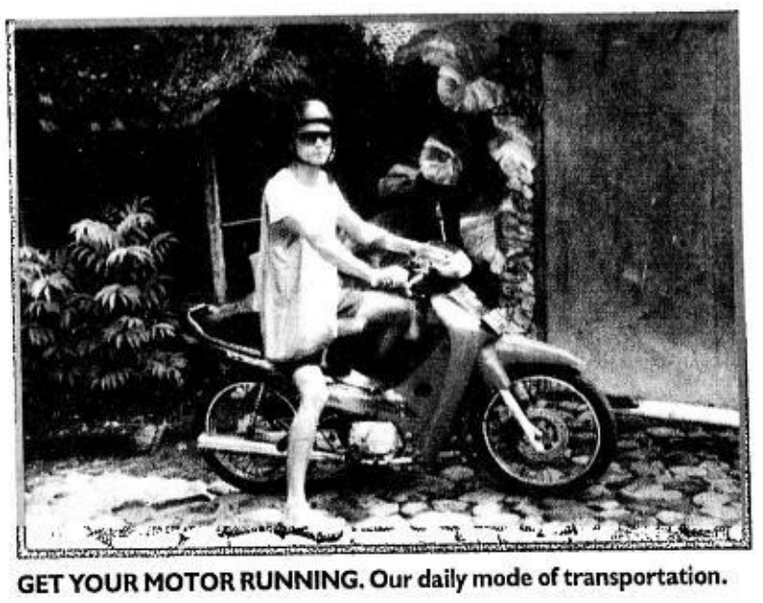
Mahal and *Mura*

Taking local tours are unnecessary in Bali. As long as you have a very good map and a guidebook like Lonely Planet, you can explore and navigate to nearby towns on your own. Riding our trusty motorbike, we headed to Ulu Watu, which is known for its Hindu temple perched atop a cliff with an amazing view. In Ubud, a hippie town of arts and crafts with practically a yoga studio and vegetarian café at every corner, we visited the Sacred Monkey Forest and did a walk around the scenic rice paddy fields. We were quite hesitant going to the Sacred Monkey Forest, as we've heard that the long tailed little creatures could actually steal handbags, hats, and even pull out large hoop earring from your ear! Another note of caution: do not buy a bunch of bananas that are being sold at the entrance unless you want a troop of monkeys to charge right at you!

One last tip is to learn the language. Because Balinese and Indonesians bear similar physical features to Filipinos, I could look local and haggle for better prices when shopping. Some words are similar to Tagalog. If you read the word Ulu Watu, which means "head stone" it sounds almost like Ulo Bato. The words mahal and mura have the same meaning as here. And for the record, the Indonesian word raya means "great."

As Corey put it, "Bali is great training for roughing it, wait 'til we go to India!" This is coming from a person who proudly says he has tried sleeping on a park bench in New York. I'm not sure how extreme I am willing to go, but perhaps next time I will actually bring a backpack.

Email the author eatyortofu@pldtdsl.net



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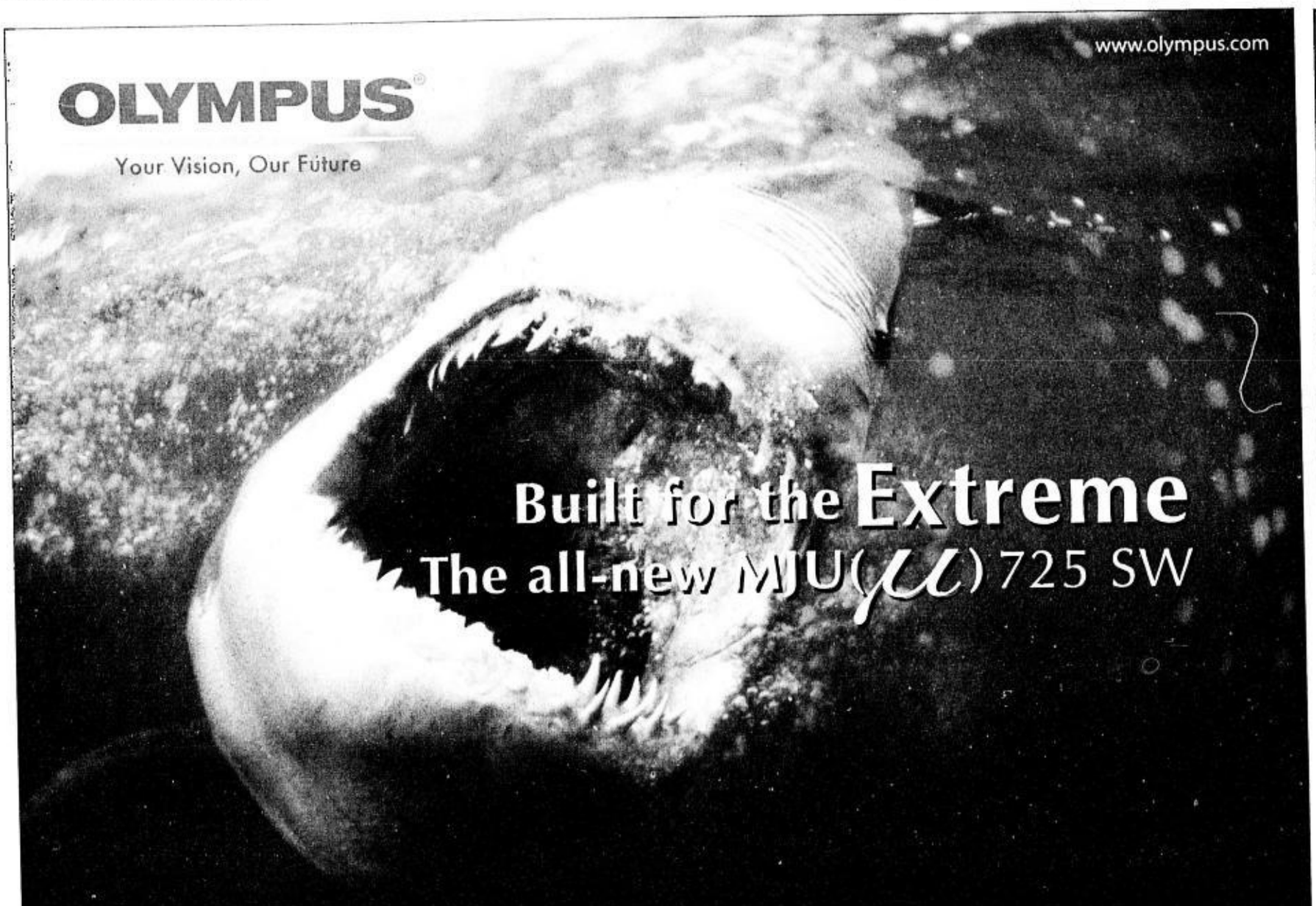
SUNSET at the rice paddy fields in Ubud.



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New TV program hosts for old

By Nestor U. Torre

NOW THAT KRIS AQUINO has gone on leave from her TV hosting chores to focus on her baby's imminent delivery, her "Pilipinas, Game K N B?" has been taken over by Edu Manzano.

Edu is an experienced game show host, so he does well at his latest assignment. Like Kris, he keeps things fairly humming along. Even better, he adds a measure of offhand wit and joviality to the proceedings. And, unlike Kris, he refrains from making personal references to himself or his loved ones—that's a welcome bonus, as well.

On "The Buzz" last Sunday, Kris was replaced by Ruffa Gutierrez, who looked lovely but didn't really do much to perk up the program. Let's hope Kris' subsequent replacements will fare better.

Focus

To her credit, Ruffa did enliven the show's long focus on Gretchen Barretto. Because she and Gretchen are good friends, Ruffa was able to come up with in-the-know questions that prompted the interviewee to open up more.

Otherwise, Ruffa is a limited program host because she appears to think that TV hosting is easier than it really is. Hosts like her (and they are legion these days) seem to believe that, if you look good, have a glib tongue, read your spiels well and come up with the regulation "*kwela*" reactions and interjections, you're doing a good job.

Alas, as more gifted and hardworking show hosts know, the job requires more than that. The creative program host has to keep his show entertaining and exciting, be on top of how it ebbs and flows, make guests feel secure and welcome enough to come up with spontaneous and heartfelt revelations, and generally make the show an organic whole with his personality, intelligence and control.

Comeback

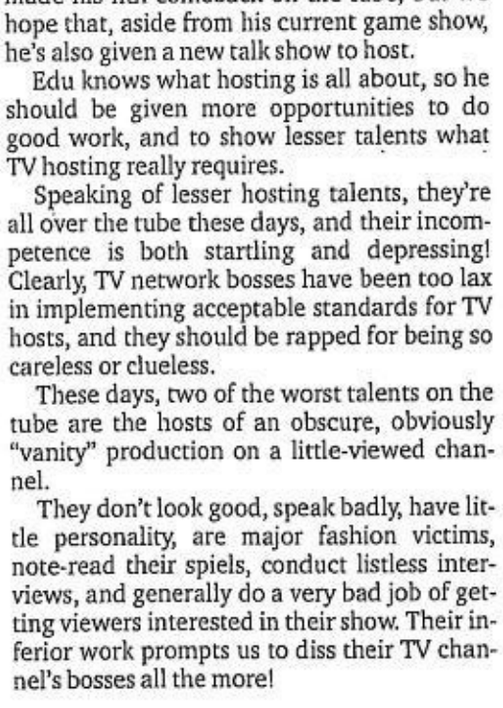
In this regard, we're glad that Edu has made his nth comeback on the tube, but we hope that, aside from his current game show, he's also given a new talk show to host.

Edu knows what hosting is all about, so he should be given more opportunities to do good work, and to show lesser talents what TV hosting really requires.

Speaking of lesser hosting talents, they're all over the tube these days, and their incompetence is both startling and depressing! Clearly, TV network bosses have been too lax in implementing acceptable standards for TV hosts, and they should be rapped for being so careless or clueless.

These days, two of the worst talents on the tube are the hosts of an obscure, obviously "vanity" production on a little-viewed channel.

They don't look good, speak badly, have little personality, are major fashion victims, note-read their spiels, conduct listless interviews, and generally do a very bad job of getting viewers interested in their show. Their inferior work prompts us to diss their TV channel's bosses all the more!



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A salute to graduates!

DO YOU HAVE A GRADUATE IN THE FAMILY and wish to celebrate their big achievement? Or perhaps you want to get together with a few buddies after a nerve-racking year of hard work and study? Then Holiday Inn Galleria Manila and Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila have the answers for you. Beginning March 18 through April 8, both hotels are offering graduates excellent dining options to choose from.

If you're in the mood for some of the best local fare, then Holiday Inn's Fab is the restaurant of choice for you. Fab features mouthwatering, popular features such as the 'ihaw-ihaw' station, an all-you-can-eat Mongolian barbecue, plus daily Hot Pot specialties, appetizing native desserts served on a rolling trolley - and it's one tantalizing buffet feast that can't be missed. As if this is not enough, Fab will also bestow a congratulatory cake for the lucky graduate.

If your craving is more for international fare, then Crowne Plaza's Seven Corners' is an excellent place to enjoy a gastronomic buffet feast. Brimming with fresh oysters, prawns, crabs and rock lobsters, plus delectable Japanese sushi and sashimi, Seven Corners' buffet showcases a daily carving special of the best US prime rib steak and 'lechon de leche' to whet your appetite. Seven Corners is also known for its delicious 'create-your-own' pizza station, home-made teppanyaki ice cream, and a decadent array of tempting desserts and chocolate fountain dips. For graduation parties of five, Seven Corners offers free buffet for the graduate.

Feel in the mood for some of the finest Chinese cuisine in Manila? Then, why not celebrate at Crowne Plaza's Xin Tian Di restaurant. Graduation Set Menus for lunch or dinner and their house specialty of Roast Duck with its aromatic, crisp skin complimented by tender, succulent meat is on offer. Exuding an understated chic ambiance, Xin Tian Di diners also offers some exclusivity in one of its handsomely decorated banquet rooms. For the graduate, a complimentary dessert is in the reward.

To book a graduation celebration, advance reservations are recommended by calling Fab at 633-7111 or Seven Corners & Xin Tian Di at 633-7222. The Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila and Holiday Inn Galleria Manila hotels are directly adjacent to Robinson's Galleria Mall, at the corner of Ortigas Avenue and Asian Development Bank Avenue.

Romance in March

LOOKING FOR A GREAT WAY TO SPEND THE month of March? How about a relaxing day or two in an elegantly furnished room, a spa treat for two, or a romantic dinner overlooking the city lights of the metropolis? Let City Garden Hotel Makati take you on a grand romantic day. First, check-in in one of its guest rooms that come for as low as P1,450 + per person on twin-sharing basis. This already includes a sumptuous buffet breakfast at the Le Jardin. After check-in, try out their fully-equipped gym or take a dip in their open-air swimming pool at the Roofdeck. Or better yet, you may opt to explore nearby Powerplant Mall at Rockwell or Glorietta Mall for some shopping. After a day of fun activities, book a massage, facial or body treatment for two at Bamboo Massage & Spa, for that much needed rejuvenation. For dinner, do not miss the Roofdeck Bar & Grill. Offering sumptuous grilled specialties and appetizers, it has the best view of the metropolis at night. A romantic end to a great day. For more details, City Garden Hotel Makati is located in Makati's restaurant strip at Makati Avenue corner Kalayaan Avenue, Makati City. For reservations or inquires, please call (02) 899-1111, or its domestic toll free number 1-800-101-GARDEN (427336), or at www.citygardenhotels.com.

Banfi super Tuscan wine-dinner at the Tivoli

MANDARIN ORIENTAL'S SIGnature restaurant The Tivoli, brings to wine and food connoisseurs a two-part gourmet wine-dinner experience dubbed "A Super Night with Super Tuscans" on Friday, March 23 at 7 p.m. The first part of the wine-dinner event is a master class to be conducted by wine master Richard Goodine, where gourmands experience a rare opportunity of sampling the individual blends that make up Summus (Latin for 'highest') and Super Tuscan. The second part is a wine-dinner consisting of a splendid seven-course culinary creation by The Tivoli's master chefs paired with the evening's featured wines.

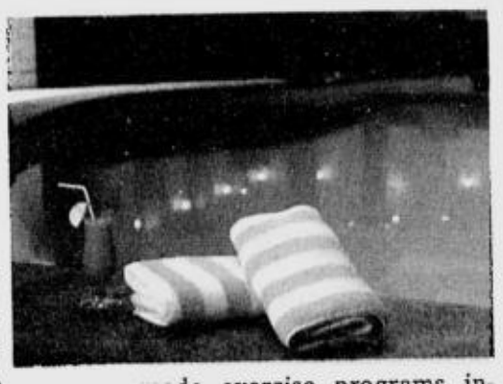
The wine-dinner event offered at P2,300+++, which is held in association with Wine Depot (http://www.winedirect.com.ph/) - the Philippines' largest wine superstore, presents an extraordinary Tuscan experience featuring the finest wines of the world-renowned Castello Banfi vineyard estate and winery in the Brunello region of Tuscany - which has been declared for an unprecedented four times as International Winery of the Year, and for the 11th time as Italy's Best Wine Estate at VinItaly's International Enological Concourse.

Renowned sommelier Richard Goodine's outstanding wine experience spans more than 15 years, from restaurant staff and management to directing the marketing efforts of a national premium wine company in Canada. Goodine, who is currently Banfi's export director for Asia Pacific, holds a higher certificate from The London Wine and Spirit Education Trust and is a certified specialist of the Wine Society of Wine Educators.

The Tivoli is now accepting reservations at 750-8888 extension 2431 to 2433.

Keep fit this summer at Richmonde Hotel

GOT TIME TO SPARE this summer? Or just want to stay fit and healthy during the hot and lazy summer days? Then join the Summer Club of Richmonde Hotel's Health Club from March 15 to June 15, and avail of all the amenities and services of the Health Club for only P5,000 net for the duration of the promo period, from Mondays to Fridays, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.



Aside from the Health Club's modern gym equipment, heated indoor pool, full serviced locker rooms, steam and sauna rooms, the Summer Club members can also enjoy personalized and friendly service from the gym's professional trainers who may design individual fitness programs specifically for the needs of each member at no extra cost. These custom-made exercise programs include fitness screening, weight training, muscle and bone strengthening, sports rehabilitation and basic therapy for injuries.

For more information on the Summer Club, the Health Club facilities or other membership programs available, call 689-8447. The Health Club is located at the 4th Floor of The Richmonde Hotel at 21 San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Astoria Plaza's Barkada Nights!

YOUR GRADUATION VICTORY WON'T BE COMPLETE WITHOUT DINNER AT Café Astoria. Avail of a special graduation set menus for 4 persons for only P2,400++ from March 1-31. Set menus come with complimentary drink of the month and gift for the graduate. Twenty percent discount on all food and beverage products are offered for every group of five when dining at Café Astoria for buffet lunch or ala carte dinner. Prior reservations required. Astoria Plaza is ideally located at #15 J. Escriva Drive (formerly Amber Ave.) Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. For inquiries, you can call 687-1111. E-mail sales@astoriaplaza.com. Website www.astoriaplaza.com. Astoria Plaza is managed with distinction by Genesis Hotels & Resorts Corp.

The Bellevue Hotel stages the 3rd Bellevue Cup

THE PREMIER BUSINESS AND LEISURE DESTINATION AND THE ultimate concert venue of southern Metro Manila, The Bellevue Hotel, announces the staging of the 3rd Bellevue Cup Invitational on March 26, at the Ayala Greenfield Golf & Leisure Club in Calamba, Laguna — an 18-hole, all-weather championship golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. The annual golfing event, now on its 3rd year, is a much-anticipated tournament organized as a way of saying thanks to Bellevue's top accounts and supporters. More than 140 players from top corporations are expected to participate in this by-invitation-only tournament which will have society columnist and avid golfer Johnny Litton as tournament director. "We are as excited as the players to finally hit the greens once again and celebrate Bellevue's many successes. As the Bellevue Cup tradition dictates, we are pulling out all the stops to make this tournament one to remember," Ryan Chan, Bellevue's director for marketing and communications said. This whole day of golfing fun and fellowship will culminate with an awards cocktails at The Bellevue Grand Ballroom where players will be showered with giveaways, trophies, premium raffle prizes and gourmet cocktails. A fashion show of select jewelry pieces by top jewelry maker Hoseki will also be a highlight of the evening. Bellevue's Johnny Chan will lead the festivities at the 3rd Bellevue Cup Invitational. For inquiries, call The Bellevue at 771-8181.

Segafredo Zanetti Espresso Bar: An update

TO DATE, THERE ARE THREE SEGAFREDO Zanetti espresso bars in operation. A full-service espresso boutique serves Makati denizens at Greenbelt 2, a kiosk at the second floor lounge of the Podium and the newest outlet in Greenhills, close to the corner of Wilson street and Ortigas Avenue.

Segafredo Zanetti brings Italy's coffee culture with Europe's finest espresso, taking the social experience that is coffee to new dimensions. The brand is the undisputed leader in Italy's institutional market, with quality, expertise and commitment to excellence that are its hallmarks.

Segafredo Zanetti is the world's only fully integrated coffee company - from its own plantation in Brazil, through roasting facilities all over Europe, to its own line of espresso machines (La San Marco brand) and on to the coffee shop business that dot the continents. With all elements in place, Segafredo takes control of quality at every phase.

The Philippine franchise is the first in Segafredo's worldwide network to introduce the full-service concept. Complementing the range of Italian espresso blends, is a selection of appetizers, light meals, fusion and Italian main courses, Italian-style pizzas, desserts, wines and spirits. The menu offering has been scaled down to coffee and accompaniments and pasta and pizza selections for the kiosk outlet at Podium and the Greenhills store, to streamline operations.

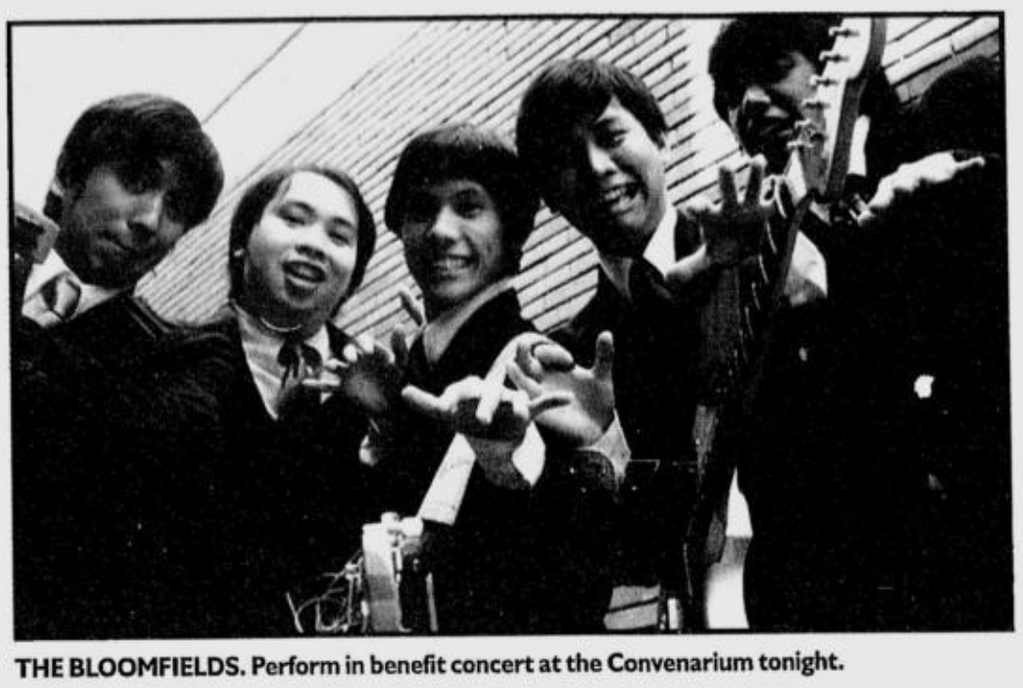
Franchise holder for the Philippine operations is Liberty Ventures Inc. Segafredo Zanetti Greenbelt is open from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m. while Podium operates from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. The Greenhills store at IBank building along Ortigas is open from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Auditions for Kaisa musical revue this afternoon

KAISA PARA SA KAUNLARAN CELEBRATES its 20th anniversary with a musical revue depicting the Chinoy in Philippine life at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex, on Sept. 15.

Auditions for actors/actresses, singers and dancers of all ages to play lead, supporting and chorus parts in the spectacular production will be held from 1 to 6 p.m. today at the Kaisa Heritage Center, 32 Anda corner Cabildo sts., Intramuros, Manila.

The auditions will be in Tagalog and English. Call 526-6796, or text 0922-8148829 or 0919-620154, and give your name, age, phone number, and preferred time to audition.



THE BLOOMFIELDS. Perform in benefit concert at the Convenarium tonight.

MONTAGE

'Love Hopes'

Creative Futures presents an inspiring and heartfelt concert, "Love Hopes," tonight at the Convenarium, Crossroads 77, Mother Ignacia ave. cor. Sct. Reyes, QC. It celebrates a love full of substance and adventure.

Education is the very tangible evidence of a love that hopes, like the love that continues to unfold in the lives of children in the concert's beneficiary, The Meridian International Learning Experience.

Proceeds will subsidize needy enrollees. Meridian seeks to provide excellent education to enable its students to compete globally, and to inspire others with their strong Christian values and virtues.

Featured concert performers are The Bloomfields, a popular boy band; the progressive blues/rock band, Blueteeth, and The Kultur Klub. JM Rodriguez emcees.

'Pirates of the Caribbean 3'

The new trailer of the third "Pirates" film, "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End," premieres locally on the Channel 7 news program, "24 Oras," on Tuesday, March 20.

It will be shown again on March 21 on "Unang Hirit," and online at yahoo.com on High Definition, and on Disney.com. Additionally, fans can now grab a "Pirate Viral Player" and add it to their own website, social networking page or blog.

In "At World's End," the lead characters played by Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley and Geoffrey Rush desperately try to free Johnny Depp from his trap in Davey Jones' locker.

ater Foundation is holding a workshop in musical theater for talents at least 13 years old from April 11 to May 19 at the Rizal Park Auditorium. Roeder Camañag is the facilitator, and Nazer Salcedo is the voice teacher. Call 526-0603, or send an SMS to 0921 528-6308.

Repeat performance

A repeat performance of "The Hearthrobs," the Piolo Pascual-Sam Milby concert, will be held tonight at Music Museum. Call 911-5555.

DEPP. Reprises role in final installment of Disney blockbuster.

Mowelfund anniversary

The Movie Workers Welfare Foundation marks its 33rd anniversary today, with activities slated from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The foundation's services benefit 2,000 movie workers. Activities include Mass, free medical and dental checkups, free clinic, bingo, raffle, snacks and entertainment. Mowelfund executive director is Boots Anson-Roa.

On Cartoon Network

At 8 a.m. today, viewers will be treated to the premiere of "An American Tale: The Treasure of Manhattan Island." Encore screening is at 7 p.m. Tomorrow, watch out for "Tom & Jerry: The Movie." Other treats: March 24, "Alvin & the Chipmunks Meet Frankenstein." March 25, "Daffy Duck's Quackbusters." March 31, "Party Wagon."

NVC auditions

The New Voice Company will be holding auditions today and tomorrow for its musical, Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's "Into the Woods." Call 896-5497.

On National Geographic Channel

March 20 at 7 p.m., "The Ship Sinkers" focuses on the creation of artificial reefs. These submerged structures provide habitat and breeding grounds for countless marine species.

Every Monday at 9 p.m., "Light at the Edge of the World" tracks indigenous cultures dedicated to the preservation of their customs in the face of modernization.

On HBO

At 9 p.m. on March 18, HBO screens the acclaimed film, "Syriana," starring George Clooney and other gifted actors. Stephen Gaghan's highly-charged political thriller centers on the oil industry.

At 9 p.m. on March 24, "Just Like Heaven" stars Reese Witherspoon as a medical resident who fights for occupancy of an apartment with a newly divorced landscape architect played by Mark Ruffalo. What she doesn't realize is that she was involved in a serious accident months ago, and while her spirit is roaming around, her body is in a coma.

'Concert at the Park'

The Firefly band, composed of firefighters who love music, takes center stage at 5 p.m. tomorrow at Rizal Park's open-air auditorium. The band leader-vocalist is Chief Insp. Leonardo I. Sabellina Jr.

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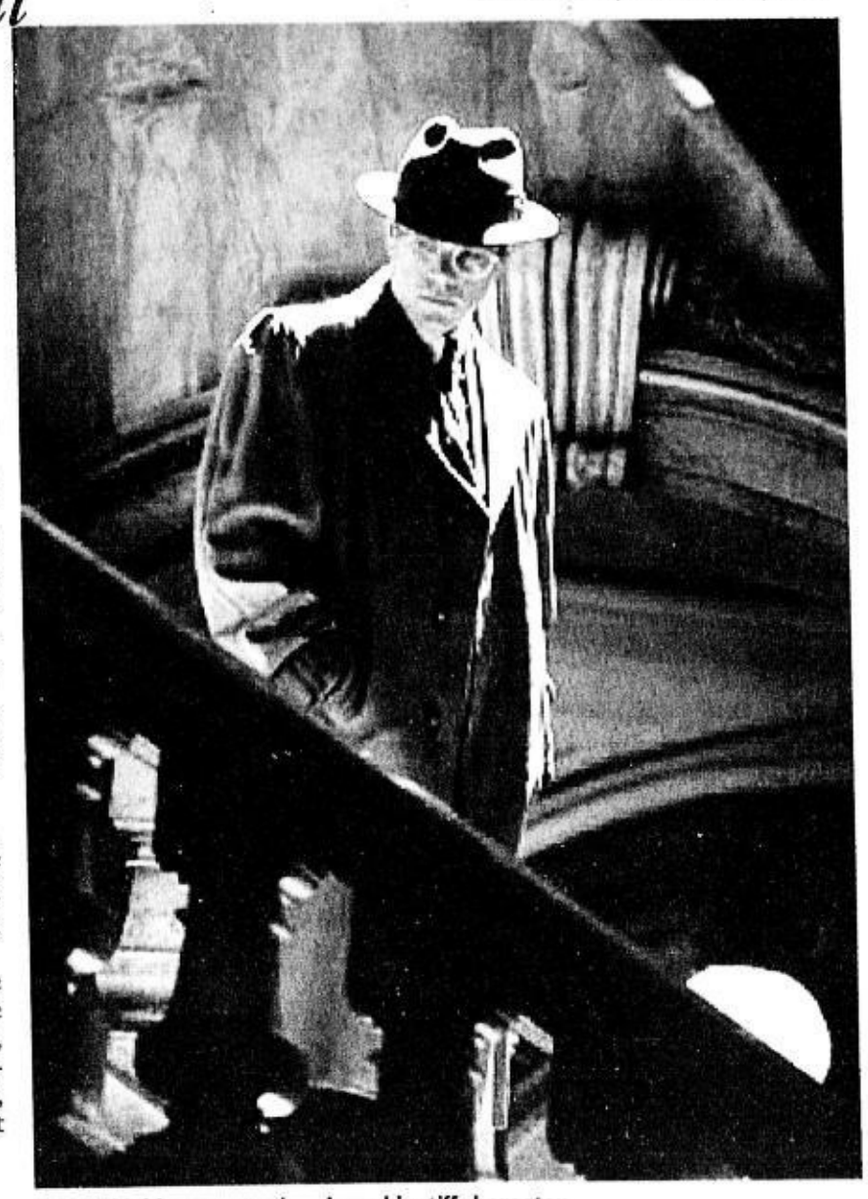
De Niro takes closer look at espionage


DAMON. Manages to rise above his stiff character.

By Noelani Torre

CLOCKING IN AT TWO hours and 40 minutes, and with a color palette seemingly made up of gray tweed, Robert De Niro's sophomore directorial effort, "The Good Shepherd," sounds ominously like one of those heavyweight films that you just have to sit through and endure.

Yet, though there are indeed moments of torpidity in this dissection of the early days of the Central Intelligence Agency, it's also fascinating, unsettling and challenging.

The film takes a closer look at the nature of espionage through the life of a fictional spy. Edward Wilson, whose character seems to be an amalgamation of those of real-life spooks, is the scion of a privileged East Coast family.

Embodiment

He goes to Yale, is inducted into the secret Skull and Bones Society, works for the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, and keeps on working for them after they become the CIA. He is the embodiment of all the WASP men who shaped "the Company," and whose influence can still be felt in current American and world politics.

Matt Damon, who plays Wilson, is as far-removed from his Jason Bourne persona as you can possibly get. His Wilson is no Bourne nor Bond—he is a serious, close-mouthed, humorless man who wears a fedora and rides to work on a bus everyday, the very picture of an ordinary civil servant. It is a testament to Damon's skill as an actor that he manages to make us interested in such a stiff persona.

The movie continuously jumps from the "present"—that is, 1961, just after the Bay of Pigs fiasco—to the past, which gives us glimpses into Wilson's early childhood trauma, his recruitment at Yale, his shotgun marriage to a Senator's daughter, his work with the O.S.S., and his awkward relationship with his son.

In the present, Wilson and his fellow spooks are trying to find the insider who leaked their plans to Fidel Castro.

As the movie unravels, we discover how Wilson got immersed in the paranoid world of intelligence-gathering, and how he slowly became nothing more than a Company man—his personal life and beliefs given up for the sake of the "preservation of democracy."

DE NIRO (RIGHT, WITH DAMON). Second directorial effort.

Fascination

It's clear that the subject holds a lot of fascination for De Niro. Thoroughly researched, the film has a slow, methodical pace.

Espionage is revealed to be something mundane (and involves a lot of folders and file cabinets). The cool gadgets are there, but they're not exciting. And people getting killed is just part of a day's work.

The movie boasts of star wattage: Angelina Jolie plays Wilson's long-suffering wife (seemingly miscast, she actually does a pretty good job); Alec Baldwin is an FBI guy; Billy Crudup is a foppish British spy; William Hurt is Wilson's boss; Michael Gambon is Wilson's professor, and De Niro plays the general who recruited Wilson.

Fine performances

They all deliver fine performances—they're not stars here, just actors who successfully immerse themselves in their respective characters.

De Niro knows how to direct his actors. He isn't always as skillful in other ways—the movie's pacing is a bit off—but he makes an impressive effort, nonetheless.

SM MALL OF ASIA presents

March 17 Sat 3PM-9PM Music Hall
16TH AD CLASH
The biggest annual event of the Advertising & Public Relations School of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

March 18 Sun 11AM onwards Music Hall
EVERLAST
A fun-filled and entertaining event showcasing Everlast's wide variety of boxing equipment and apparel.

March 20 Tues 6PM Music Hall
THE FASHION SHOW
Introducing the 2007 Summer Collection of the toughest Hardwear this side of the North Shore featuring Oakley, Reef, and Surfer Girl apparel.

March 21-22 Wed-Thurs 11AM onwards
International Skating Rink
2007 PHILIPPINE GRANDPRIX OPEN
A high level competition with 60 freestyle skaters including skaters from the US, Singapore, Japan, and other countries.

March 22 Thurs 5PM-7PM Music Hall
CLAY & POTTER PRE-SCHOOL MUSICAL PLAY

March 23-25 Fri-Sun 10AM onwards
Music Hall
SOCCER MANIA
Experience the game of soccer at the mall! Join interactive games like Beat the Goalie, The Juggle Challenge, The Dribble Race, Kick-a-Prize, and Soccer Clinics. Plus get a chance to win a lot of cool, cool prizes along the way.

March 23 Fri 4PM - 6PM Music Hall
HUMAN PRESENTS: APL DE AP
Apl de Ap of the Black Eyed Peas joins HUMAN as their newest endorser. Party with Apl and other HUMAN endorsers like Rivermaya, Geoff Eigenmann and a lot more.

March 25 Sun 8:30PM North Open Parking
MINI FIRE OLYMPICS 2007
In celebration of the Fire Prevention Month, witness a static display of equipment for rescue and fire safety tools by the Fire Volunteers Association.

March 30 Fri 8AM - 6PM Music Hall
POLE VAULT FESTIVAL
One of the most exciting events in Track & Field participated by athletes from various ASEAN countries.

March 30 Fri 6PM Main Mall Atrium
SITTI WITH THE MANILA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

March 31 Sat 6PM Music Hall
CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA WITH THE MANILA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

April 1 Sun 11AM onwards Music Hall
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THE C/S CABLE entertainment channel consists of three program franchises that provide an unprecedented collection that appeals to the suspense/drama and action-adventure fan.

C/S Series features top-rating shows on television today, like the Keifer Sutherland blockbuster, "24"; the engaging "Prison Break," which stars Wentworth Miller and Dominic Purcell; the latest version of the hit reality series, "Survivor: Fiji," and the award-winning "Law & Order."

MILLER. Topbills "Prison Break."

Breakout hit

It showcases popular and groundbreaking series like the must-see breakout hit, "Heroes" ; the suspense drama, "Jericho"; and the cult sci-fi hit, "Battlestar Galactica."

C/S Chronicles provides a unique and unprecedented look at intriguing and highly acclaimed true-crime and factual dramas, from legal and forensic shows like the popular "Dominic Dunne's Power, Privilege and Justice," "Final Justice with Erin Brokovich," and the chilling "Body of Evidence."

Exciting reality series include the no-holds-barred "The Takedown," the captivating "Psychic Detectives," the behind-the-scenes look at "Crime Scene Academy" and the must-see "What Should You Do?"

Big Hit Movies showcases blockbuster hits and genre-defining movies. C/S can be seen nationwide.

SATURDAY *Special*

The *Sharon* factor in the senatorial polls

CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

THE PANGILINANS. The persuasive power of "star appeal by association" shouldn't be discounted.

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR MONTHS NOW, LOREN Legarda has been topping senatorial poll surveys by a comfortable margin. Last week, however, the latest survey revealed that Kiko Pangilinan had edged her out of the top slot in terms of voter preference.

This unexpected development was promptly headlined in newspapers and on TV newscasts, further boosting public awareness of Pangilinan's now high-flying candidacy.

Big question

The big question is, why did Pangilinan top the senatorial surveys *now*, rather than last month? Political pundits have weighed in with their detailed analyses, citing key developments like the candidate's being edged out of the opposition slate due to lack of "cooperation," prompting him to make the "risky" decision to run as an independent candidate.

Apparently, the voting public approves of political risk-takers and relatively independent senatorial minds, hence the surge in Pangilinan's approval rating.

Another factor cited is the reelectionist candidate's good record as a legislator during his first term in the Senate. But, that record was there to react to in the past, so it can't be cited as a new input to help explain the candidate's surge.

A third plus point for Pangilinan could be what we might call the Sharon factor, alluding to Pangilinan's popular wife, Sharon Cuneta.

Effect

This is a plus factor whose effect may not be all that easy to quantify, but it's instructive to note the timing of some recent developments in this regard:

In the cusp between the previous survey and the latest one that showed Pangilinan in the lead,

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When applying for your postpaid line, bring a valid I.D. and your latest competitor bill.
If competitor bill is not available, bring Proof of Billing and Proof of Income.
Also available
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Nokia 1112
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Monthly Service Fee: P699
Discounted Daytime Call & Text Unlimited*
(Only P233 per subscriber monthly)
Plus 300 FREE Texts!
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See finest boxers from the Elorde Boxing Gyr compete like the great Rocky himself

MTRCB Rating: PG-13

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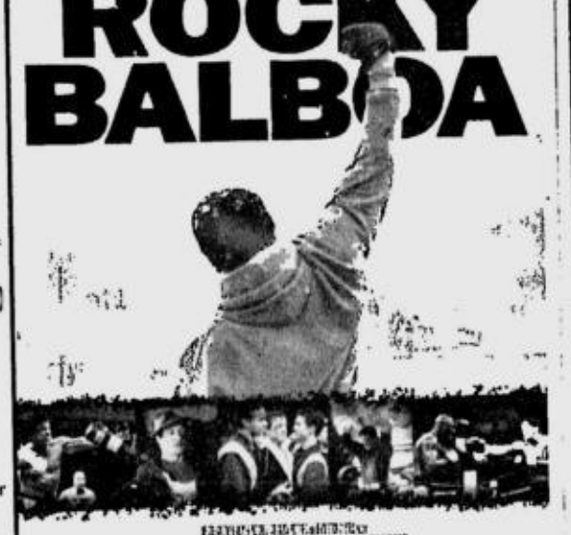
OPENS MARCH 28

METRO MANILA

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SUPERMAN RETURNS 3D
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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2D
8:30PM Admission Fee- P200/ P250
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11:30AM 1:00PM 2:30PM 4:00PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
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4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER
PREMIERE CINEMA
YOU GOT ME
CENTERSTAGE
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BECAUSE I SAID SO
CINEMA 2
DREAMGIRLS/ 300
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SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 DREAMGIRLS
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 BATAD
4 GHOST RIDER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 300
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 HAPPY HEARTS
9 SIQUIJOR
10 DEAD PEOPLE 2
11 PATHFINDER
12 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
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2 DREAMGIRLS
3 300
4 PATHFINDER
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
7 SIQUIJOR
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
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SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
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2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
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6 DREAMGIRLS
7 PATHFINDER
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9 BECAUSE I SAID SO
10 SIQUIJOR
11 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

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3 PATHFINDER
4 YOU GOT ME
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 SIQUIJOR
9 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
10 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
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2 PATHFINDER
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 SIQUIJOR
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 SIQUIJOR
4 300
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 YOU GOT ME
8 GHOST RIDER
9 BATAD

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 300

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 EPIC MOVIE
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 SIQUIJOR
12 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
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2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 EPIC MOVIE

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 THE HITCHER
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3 PATHFINDER
4 HAPPY HEARTS
5 300
6 YOU GOT ME
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2

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3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
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3 YOU GOT ME
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2 300
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2 YOU GOT ME
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4 300

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2 BATAD
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5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
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2 RESERVED
3 300
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A GIRL BOY THING
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2 EPIC MOVIE
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3 PATHFINDER
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
1:05 3:15 5:25 7:35 9:50

5 DREAMGIRLS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 SIQUIJOR
1:35 3:40 5:45 7:50 10:00

8 indieSine: COMPOUND
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

9 YOU GOT ME
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3 DREAMGIRLS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

4 HAPPY HEARTS
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00

5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00

6 300
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

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1 DREAMGIRLS
12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

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3 YOU GOT ME
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

4 HAPPY HEARTS
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

5 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

7 PATHFINDER
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8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

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CUNETA. Firmly and fervently endorses her husband's second senatorial bid.

The Sharon...

From page H1

Sharon came out strongly for her husband, stating that she was even prepared to sell their home to help fund his campaign.

Reelection

Even more persuasively in a multimedia sense, Sharon appeared in a new political spot firmly and fervently endorsing her husband's reelection. Also disarmingly effective was a separate political spot featuring the couple's daughters, Frankie and Miel.

In our view, these fresh inputs factored into Pangilinan's recent surge, and may have been *the* factor that tipped the latest senatorial survey in Pangilinan's favor.

This is not to detract from the reelectionist senator's own credentials and achievements, but it could help explain why he's currently at the top of his political game to win viewers' hearts, minds—and votes.

Participation

If so, Sharon, Frankie and Miel should take a bow, and it's likely that the doting, pragmatic and grateful candidate won't begrudge them their share of participation in his expected victory at the polls.

Further, this development underscores the strong and persuasive links between politics and stellar clout in this country.

On-camera talents (Joseph Estrada, Loren Legarda, Bong Revilla, Noli de Castro) have parlayed their popularity into political careers, and now it's time for "star appeal by association" (Pangilinan, Ralph Recto) to be acknowledged as another key factor that's currently asserting itself strongly in the country's political life.

(A new survey now shows Legarda back in first place, followed by Panfilo Lacson and Pangilinan.)

Exquisite

From page H3

mid-1980s. In the base-heavy "Better," she immerses herself in grunge, then segues into rhythmic, snare drum-beating cadences—like a marching band!

Romantic strain

In "Samson," beneath a deceptively romantic strain, she displays a lyrical fecundity that's too witty to resist: "You are my sweetest downfall. I loved you first. The sheets of paper lie in my truth. I have to go. Your hair was long when we first met..."

Then, there's the groovesome "Hotel Song," a track reminiscent of bump-and-grind bubblegum songs of the '60s. She takes a 360-degree turn from the chamber music-like "Apres

EXQUISITE/ H4

Exquisite sound, incandescent singing from Janno Gibbs, Regina Spektor

By Rito P. Asilo

JANNO GIBBS IS IN TOP VOCAL FORM IN "Little Boy," his latest collection of loves songs and rich melodies. With the current surfeit of pleasant to look at but vocally-challenged newcomers in pop music, it's gratifying to listen to someone who can really sing—and how.

The album contains 10 tracks—a good number of them composed by Gibbs himself—and includes duets with Jolina Magdangal ("Let Me Be the One") and Jennylyn Mercado ("Moments of Love," from the movie of the same title).

GIBBS. Resurrects two of Rey Valera's classics.

Paean

The title track is a simple but sweet musical paean that celebrates a man's hard-earned triumph over a difficult life, which Janno sings with utmost restraint. He reflects: "At the end of every day. . .I close my eyes and pray for the one that got away, because deep inside me, nothing's really changed. I'm just a little boy with big dreams of flying/ So I can touch the sky..."

With incandescent singing and an optimistic tone, he peppers his latest album with easy-to-follow melodies and hopeful songs like "You Are to Me" and the beautiful "Pinakamamahal," which evokes the timeless quality of Willy Cruz and George Canseco's achingly beautiful love songs.

Welcome inclusions are covers of two Rey Valera hits, "Kung Tayo'y Magkakalayo" and the infectiously playful "Ako si Superman." Using a more contemporary arrangement, Janno resurrects the former with a soulful rendition that gives it more urgency and pathos.

Humor

Of course, a Janno Gibbs album isn't complete without the singer's brand of humor and smart-aleck antics. In the fun and flirtatious "Sexy Mama," for instance, he collaborates with Andrew E., the talented rapper who rose to "fame" with his songs' irreverent wit and catchy, melodic riffs.

And radio-weaned pop fans are more likely to make "Let Me Be the One," Gibbs' next chart-topper after the memorable likes of "Ipagpatawad Mo" and "I Believe in Dreams."

Janno's rich, masculine voice blends beautifully with Jolina Magdangal's sweet and crystal-clear alto. Indeed, it's great to have Janno back in the recording scene.

Another talented artist whose latest album frequents our CD player these days is 27-year-old Regina Spektor.

In this day and age when more and more people have developed a versatile ear—and unique musicality—you'd think nothing could surprise you anymore. Well, think again—or listen to the Moscow-born singer-musician's first mainstream album, "Begin to Hope."

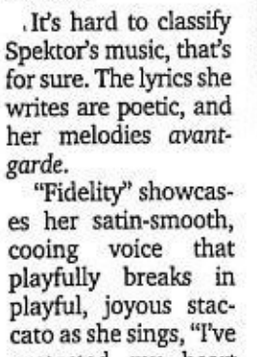
Poetic

It's hard to classify Spektor's music, that's for sure. The lyrics she writes are poetic, and her melodies *avant-garde*.

"Fidelity" showcases her satin-smooth, cooing voice that playfully breaks in playful, joyous staccato as she sings, "I've protected my heart truly. I got lost in the sounds that I hear in my mind/ All these words and music. It breaks my heart..." She displays the same verve in the (literally) finger-snapping "On the Radio."

Is Spektor's music mainstream pop? Critics and industry pundits describe it as "anti-folk"—a genre related to punk rock and American folk music that originated in New York in the

EXQUISITE/ H2



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Sense of *déjà vu* in 'Pathfinder'

By Noelani Torre

THE FIRST THING YOU FEEL WHEN you watch the movie, "Pathfinder," is a strong sense of *déjà vu*. With its images of majestic mountains and of a scruffy, long-haired guy battling a horned figure, it will remind you of that *other* ultra-successful film.

That it stars an actor who was in that other movie (which, in case you haven't caught on yet, is the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy) only makes the similarity seem stronger.

Shipwrecked

Apart from those aspects, however, the film bears no resemblance to "LOTR." It tells the tale of a young Viking shipwrecked on the shores of North America, who is then raised by good-hearted Indians.

When he's all grown up, his savage, land-grabbing kinsmen return and slaughter his entire home village. It's up to him to stop them from decimating the other villages.

There's also another less well-known film that appears to have inspired "Pathfinder." A 1987 Norwegian movie of the same title (nominated for best foreign film at the Oscars) basically has the same plot—the only points of difference are the location and the lead characters' ages. What's more, if you're familiar with James Fenimore Cooper's stories, you've probably heard of the white boy who was raised by "savages."

Heroism

The movie is not a fantasy, epic, nor a heart-warming film about a young boy's heroism. When you come right down to it, it's not even *that* good a movie—which is not to say that it's bad, it's middling..

Karl Urban (who played Eomer in "LOTR"), manages to hold your attention as Ghost, the transplanted Viking. But, aside from him, there's nothing much else that's interesting in this movie.

OK, there's the bit about the rewriting of history: Its story is premised on the popular-among-historians theory that the Vikings landed in the New World *before* Columbus did—but your average moviegoer isn't going to be particularly fascinated with *that* aspect, especially since this is an action-adventure, not a documentary.

Exception

Speaking of action, "Pathfinder" doesn't disappoint in that regard, but—with the exception of one literally cliff-hanging scene—neither does it get your blood going.

Directed by German director Marcus Nispel, who gave us that completely unnecessary remake of "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre," many of the action scenes are fast but curiously lacking in tension.

Nispel once said in an interview that he would give his right arm "for a write-up like: 'Pathfinder: Lord of the Rings by a Sociopath.'" It doesn't even come close.

Exquisite

From page H2

Moi," in which she sounds like—Bjork!

In "20 Years of Snow," brace yourself for the cascading sound of exquisite piano-playing. In the strangely neurotic "That Time," Spektor rummages through her experiences—from burying a dead cat "hit by morning" to an unforgettable moment when she was awaiting news about a dear friend who OD'd!

Call her music Bohemian, New Age, grunge or pop-rock. Whatever it is, it's pretty clear that Regina Spektor defies classification. But, this we know for sure: She's thought-provoking, unpredictable, lyrical, melodic, playful, introspective—and deserves your full attention and patronage!

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Dench, Blanchett ignite taut dramatic thriller

By Rito P. Asilo

"Notes on a Scandal"
D: Richard Eyre
S: Judi Dench, Cate Blanchett and Bill Nighy

DARK SECRETS ABOUND IN Richard Eyre's explosive drama about two women—brilliant veteran schoolteacher, Barbara Covett (Judi Dench), and beautiful Bohemian art instructor, Sheba Hart (Cate Blanchett)—who form an unlikely alliance when the former catches Sheba having sex with her 15-year-old student, Steven (Andrew Simpson).

Suddenly, the sexually-repressed Barbara finds the excitement that has long eluded her lonely, seemingly vacuous existence. She swears not to tell anyone *if* Sheba, who has two kids and a much-older husband (Bill Nighy), promises to end the affair immediately.

This secret, Barbara realizes, gives her power over Sheba who, unfortunately, is having a difficult time cutting off her exciting, sexual trysts with the infatuated schoolboy.

As Barbara becomes an increasingly inconvenient fixture in Sheba's household—and a looming, predatory presence in her life—it slowly dawns on Sheba that the possessive, older woman has developed a sexual interest in her!

DENCH AND BLANCHETT. Dramatic tension and moral pertinence.

The two women's tenuous relationship, comes to a head when Sheba chooses to go with her family to watch her son's play, even after Barbara "orders" her to stay by her side as she grieves for her dying cat! Soon after, a scandal over the affair erupts and puts the peaceful London suburb in a tizzy.

Indeed, hell hath no fury like Judi Dench scorned! Who would have thought the menace or sinister presence of Hannibal Lecter would find its equal in Barbara Covett—and in a drama at that?! Hannibal, eat your heart out! *Oops.*

We have long admired theater and film director Richard Eyre's ability to ratchet up dramatic moments with scenes that can make viewers wince with unbridled fear or familiarity.

We first noticed his directorial "specialty" when we saw his play, "Vincent in Brixton," in London, and were consequently bowled over by the fine performances he coaxed from Dench and Kate Winslet in 2001's "Iris" and from Billy Crudup and Rupert Everett in 2004's "Stage Beauty."

This time, Dench and Blanchett ignite Eyre's disturbingly twisted tale with performances that seethe with vigor, dramatic tension and moral pertinence.

Eyre's storytelling style, however, falters when he tries to score some scare points by making Barbara more physically aggressive than she should be.

After all, a simple stare or a meaningful smirk from Dench is enough to make Blanchett's character wet her pants—and scare the living daylights out of us!

LISA MACUJA *brings art and culture to the airwaves*

By Remy M. Umerez

PRIMA BALLERINA LISA MACUja explores the power of broadcasting in her mission to develop greater public appreciation for art and culture through the new radio program, "Art 2 Art."

The 30-minute talk show, which premiered last March 11 on dzRH, features some of the country's noted artists, art educators, administrators and patrons.

Macuja laments: "I feel sad that many people these days don't know who our National Artists are. *Mas kilala pa nila ang* scholars ng 'Dream Academy.' We need positive role models for our youth. It's time to reawaken our high regard for values like perseverance, courage, hard work, dedication and the pursuit of excellence."

MACUJA. "We need positive role models for the youth."

Tribute

A regular feature of Lisa's radio program pays tribute to National Artists whose indelible contributions to our society are discussed and made relevant for the younger generation.

Maestro Ryan Cayabyab graced the initial episode. Mr. C is considered an influential force in contemporary music. As musical director, conductor, composer, instrumentalist and vocal performer, he has successfully fused classical training with popular taste.

"One of the very first pop songs I danced to was Ryan's 'Limang Dipang Tao,'" Macuja recalls. "I was then with Dance Theater Philippines. We have since worked together on many collaborations, and they were always great experiences for me. I can't forget what he told me once, 'When you aspire for something, aspire for the best!'"

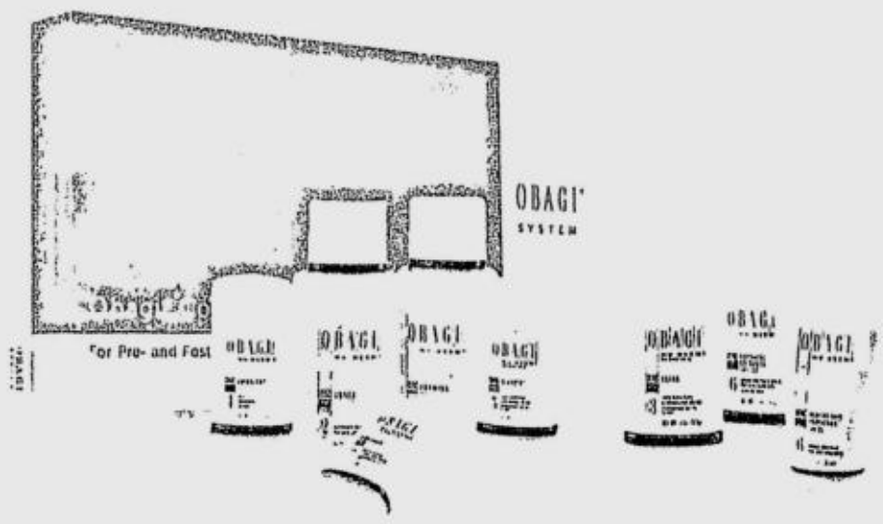
Indigenous culture

In future episodes, 'Art 2 Art' will present guests from the fields of music, dance, literature, visual arts and film. It will also feature indigenous culture and traditional art forms.

Lisa says it's hard to share her craft on the airwaves "because dance is best appreciated visually. It's not easy to talk about it. However, there are other ways to further the cause of promoting art appreciation and consciousness to the public. One of them is through a lively exchange of ideas and experiences with fellow artists on the air."

"Art 2 Art (Usaping Sining at Kultura Para sa Lahat)" is produced by the Manila Broadcasting Company.

FUTURE PERFECT



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He was told that she would pay back every peso she stole from him in due time.

Offense

We have no right to take things that aren't ours. Stealing is a spiritual offense—it's unacceptable in any society.

A parent who condones the wrongful actions of his child does more harm than good. Everything we do has a consequence. Consider these truths:

1. Human existence constitutes a life of responsibility. We should be held accountable for our actions. Covering up for your child's faults won't benefit him. The sooner the child realizes his mistakes, the better and faster for him to rectify the situation.

2. The Vedas explains that we, as spirit-souls, are

TRUTH/ I4

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DREAMGIRLS 1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30
300 11:35 / 2:05 / 4:35 / 7:05 / 9:50
THE GOOD SHEPHERD 2:00 / 5:30 / 9:00
YOU GOT ME 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
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300 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
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2 PATHFINDER 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
3 HAPPY HEARTS 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
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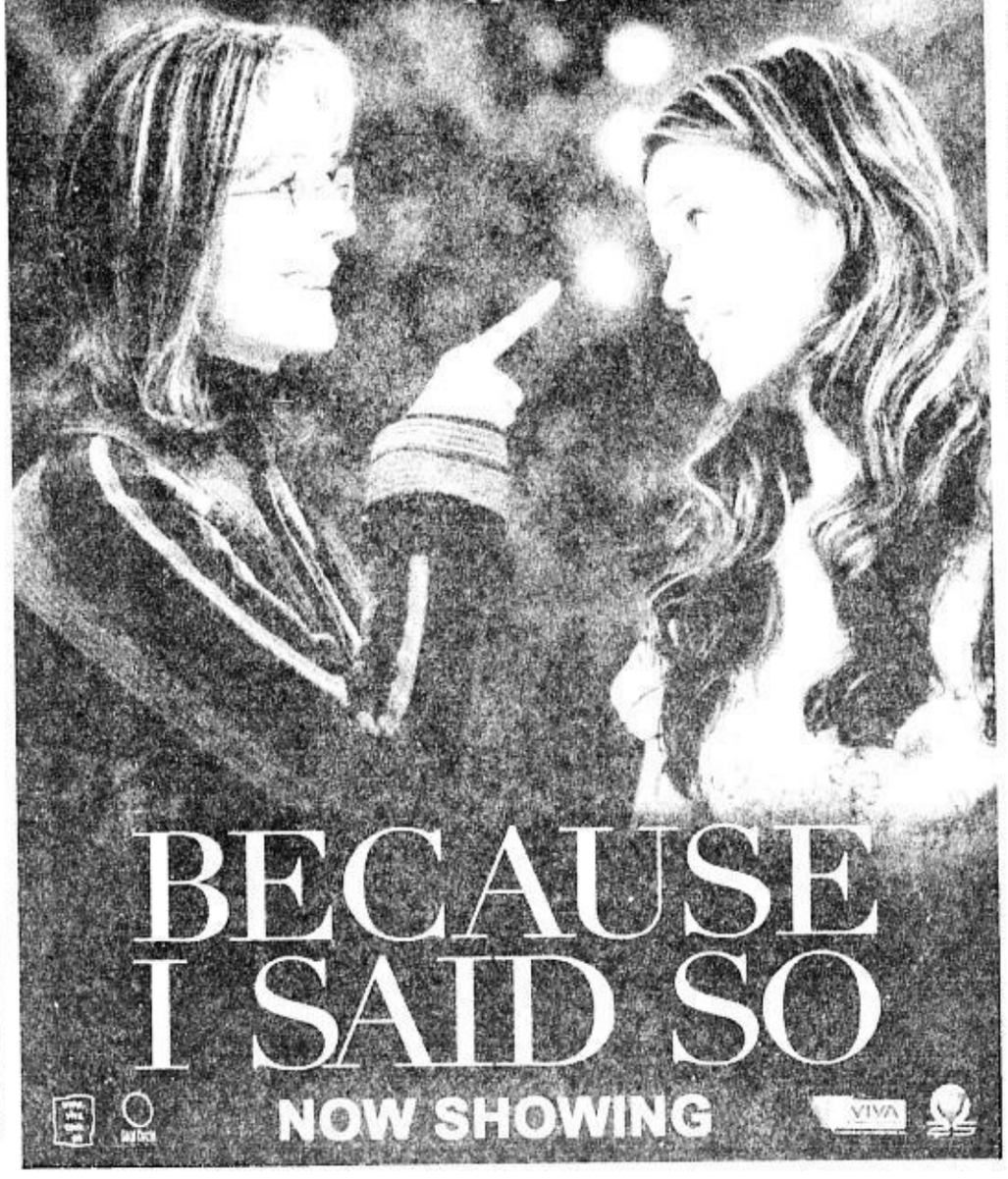
Shops for her clothes.
Now, she's shopping for her date.



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300 R13 12:00,2:30,5:00, 7:30,10:00	GOOD SHEPHERD R13 1:20,4:35 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS G 7:50,10:20	300 R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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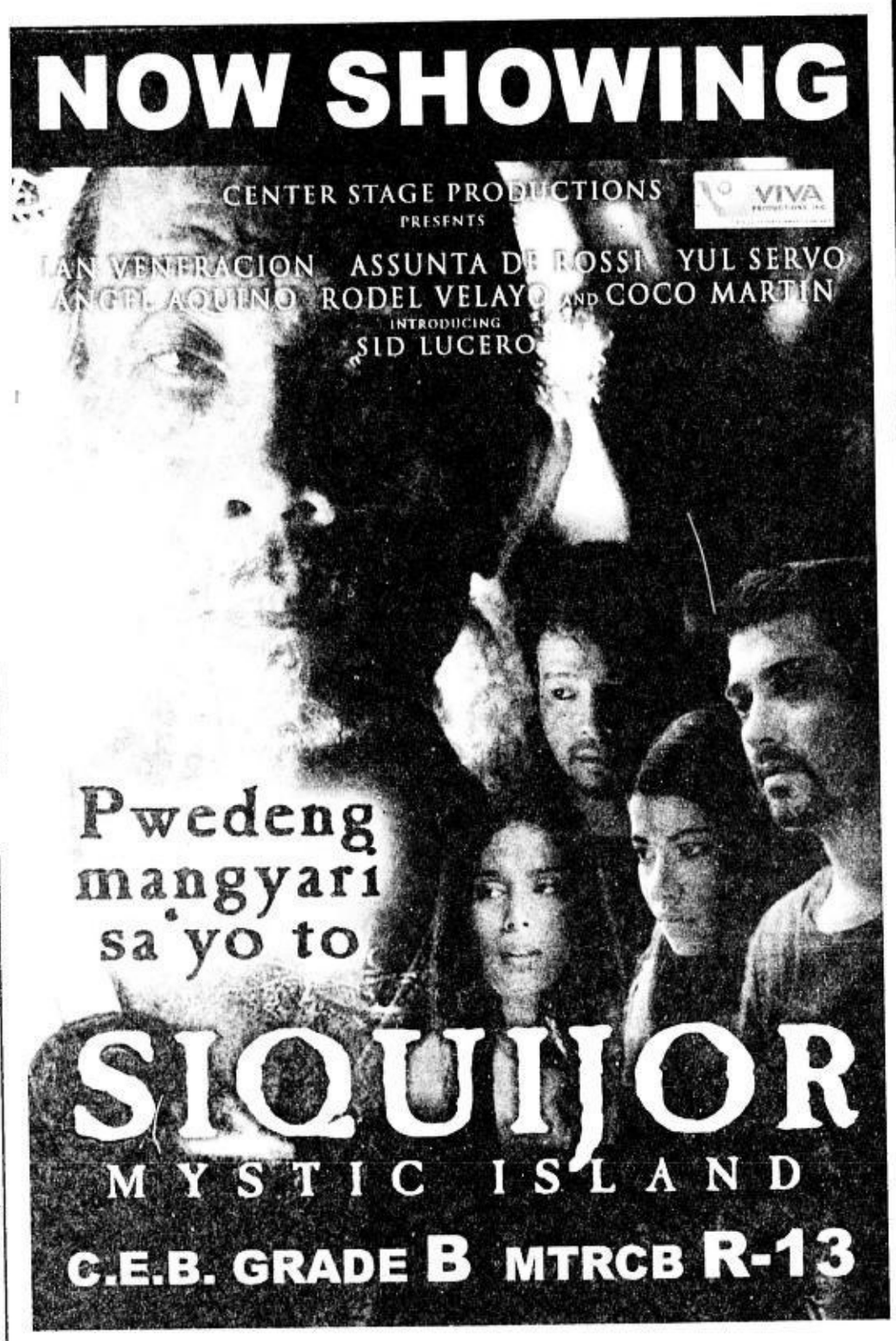

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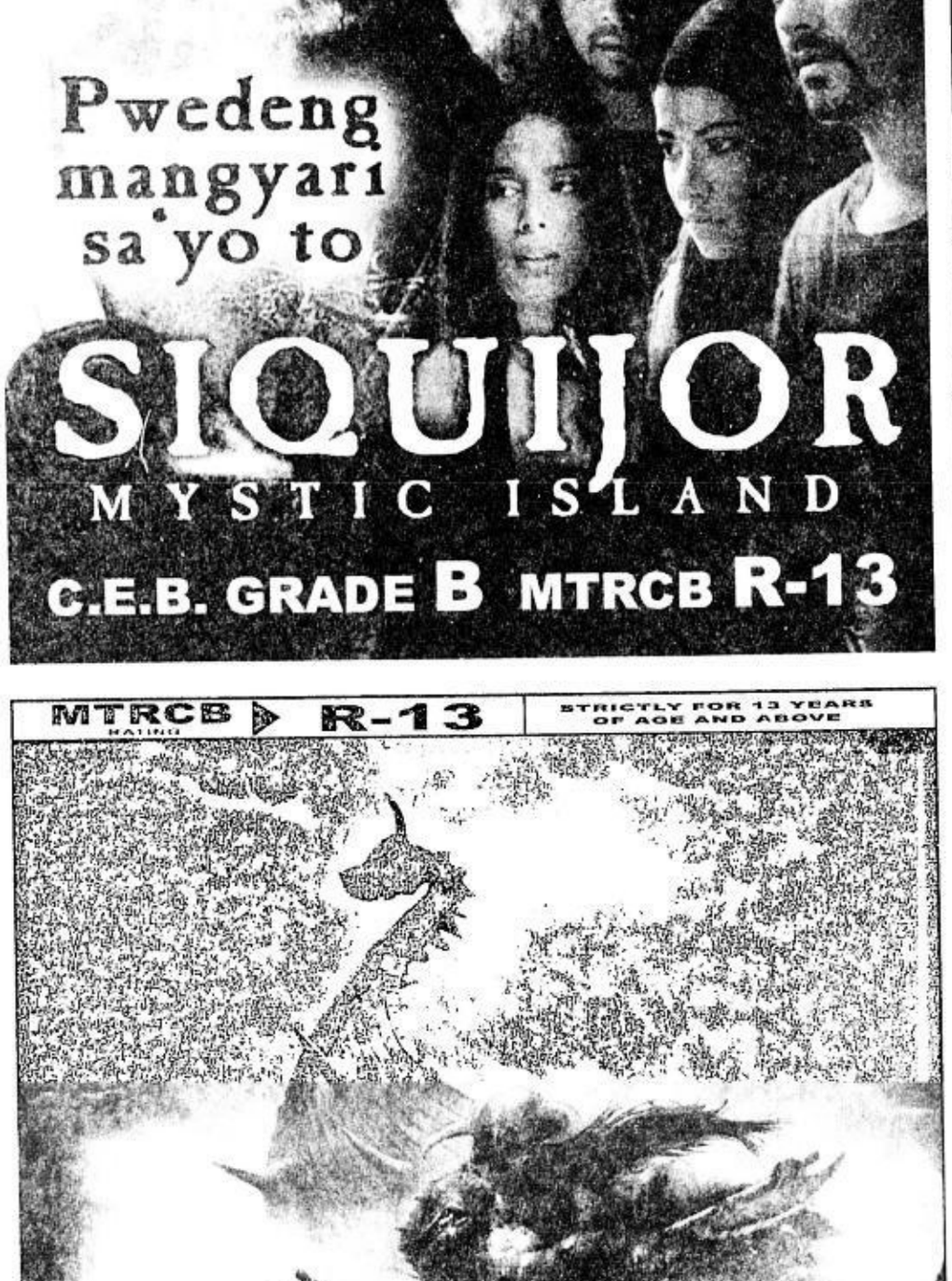

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3 BECAUSE I SAID SO 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 R-13
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6 (GOLD SDDS) PATHFINDER
7 (GOLD SDDS) PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
8 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) THE GOOD SHEPHERD
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2 300
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Triple low blows on 'AI'

By Nestor U. Torre

AFTER SOME nerve-wracking weeks, "American Idol" finally pared its 24 semifinalists down to its magic 12 last March 9.

Instructive

It's been quite a roller-coaster to date, with these most significant and hopefully instructive highs and lows:

Lone Fil-Am bet TJ Tabaldo's premature dismissal could indicate that the vaunted Filipino-American vote is no longer as formidable as it was the year that it propelled Jasmine Trias to third place and Camille Velasco to fifth.

Tabaldo's early exit was particularly disappointing because, the week he was dropped, he had come up with his best performance to date.

As the tilt's jurors pointed out, the Fil-Am singer was a good song stylist—and he should have gotten into the finals!

Well, if the Fil-Am vote has lost its collective star-making clout, it's been replaced by the Indian-American vote, which has been so strong that it's boosted the charming but vocally limited Sanjaya into the final 12.

Sanjaya's victory came at the expense of Sundance, one of the tilt's strongest male bets. But, "American Idol" is basically all about numbers, and all those Indians (from India) in the States collectively rained on Sundance's parade.

Sanjaya's victory was the big clincher to the tilt's "bloody" final telecast before its finals got underway this week. The three other casualties were Jared, Antonella and Sabrina.

Exceptional

It looked like American voters goofed big time, since Sundance, Jared and Sabrina were exceptional performers. So much for the popular vote, the show's jurors were dismayed and even outraged at the triple low blows.

Only in the case of Antonella were most people in agreement that a glaringly weak semifinalist had been eliminated.

Incidentally, Antonella was the last blonde female semifinalist to be kicked out of the show, leaving only Haley as the only female finalist with light-colored hair (she was unfairly chosen over the more talented Sabrina).

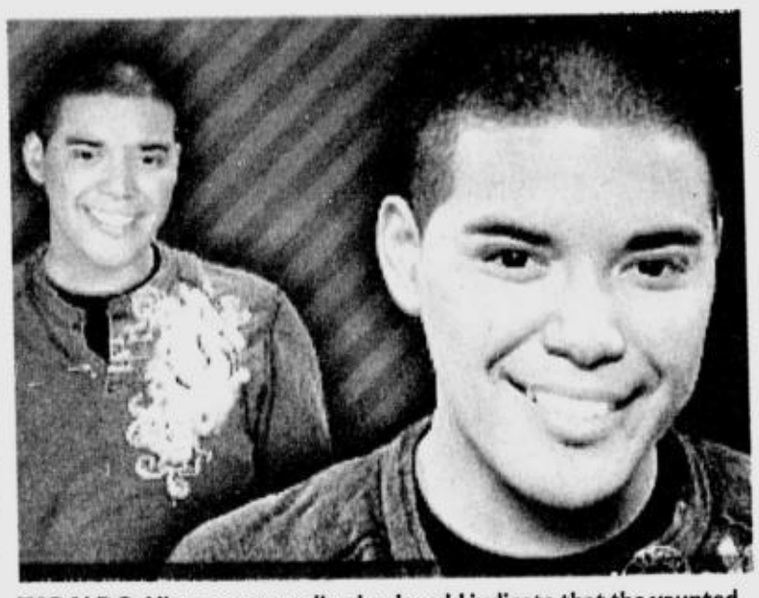
Each week, the tilt's blonde and white female semifinalists were sequentially voted out, leaving mostly black women in the finals. So much for W.A.S.P. appeal, it's likely that this year's Idol will be black—either Lakiesha or Melinda.

Preference

Thus, it looks like after Carrie Underwood and Taylor Hicks, "AI" fans are resuming their preference for black winners like Ruben Studdard and Fantasia Barrino.

It'll be a couple of months before the 2007 tilt's voters finally affirm or reject our prediction, so we'll just have to watch and wait.

On the *other* hand, if the Indian vote continues to assert its strength, even the inexperienced and relatively phlegmatic Sanjaya could have a shot at the top prize! Sanjaya, your Indian-American Idol? Uh-oh.



TABALDO. His premature dismissal could indicate that the vaunted Filipino-American vote has lost its collective star-making clout.

Iconic love teams showed downside to constant proximity

By Behn Cervantes

DESPITE THE DISASTROUS RESults of the world's first team-up—Adam and Eve—the entertainment industry continues its search for the most ideal love teams possible.

The Bible had other legendary, romantic pairs, of course. But, whether they were happy together or not remains questionable.

Just remember the fate of Samson after he fell head over heels in love with Delilah, or how foolishly the supposedly wise King Solomon behaved because of the seductive charms of his wily queen.

And look what became of John the Baptist after Salome performed the Dance of the Seven Veils!

Romance

Centuries later, William Shakespeare wrote the tragic love story of Romeo and Juliet. Their names have become synonymous to romance. Of course, the Bard also wrote about the darker and more dramatic Othello and Desdemona, Hamlet and Ophelia, and Lord and Lady Macbeth.

But, Hollywood has a more optimistic outlook: Tinseltown wants the boy to get the girl—well, at least, on the big screen.

To make those celluloid relationships more exciting, they pepper these pairings with various problems.

The plot usually goes like this: Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, but boy gets girl in the end. A third party is par for the course, but this extraneous addition to the equation would have his/her comeuppance in the end. So, all's well that ends well—and our romantic pair "lives happily ever after." But, do they really?

EDDY AND MACDONALD. Hardly talked to each other off the set.

OBERON AND OLIVIER. Called each other names.

Fertile imagination

Ironically, many of Hollywood's most successful romantic pairs were merely "reel" lovers. In fact, a number of them even hated each other! Take the iconic pair of Sir Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon ("Wuthering Heights").

Rarely has a pair so ignited the movie-going public's fertile imagination. To this day, Olivier and Oberon's incandescent team-up remains legendary.

However, Olivier hated the Tasmanian-born actress. He called her 'Pock Mark' for some of the actress' facial scars that may have resulted from chicken pox. In return, the diminutive beauty called him worse names.

Another much admired partnership was the duo of soprano Jeanette MacDonald and baritone Nelson Eddy. They exchanged love songs, swooned, and danced with each other—from the Canadian Rockies to the deep South. After making a lot of films together, I guess the old adage about proximity breeding contempt proved right.

In the end, they hardly talked to each other off the set. On the big screen, however, they convincingly serenaded each other with love songs—to the delight of the audience *and* their producers!

'Brush with Fate' on Hallmark

ELLEN BURSTYN AND GLENN Close star in **"Brush with Fate"** on the Hallmark Channel on March 19. The film delves into the history and mystery surrounding an unknown Vermeer painting that has been prized by different owners through the decades. Other films on view:

March 20, **"Night Ride Home"**—a moving drama that shows how tragedy saves a troubled marriage.

March 21, **"The Last Chance"**—an estranged father and daughter are reunited after the death of a family member.

Efforts

March 22, **"Crown Heights"**—about the efforts of a Hassidic Jew and an African-American youth to unite their embattled community.

March 26, **"The Long Way Home"**—after five decades, a widower heads out west to see a very important person.

March 27, **"Deacons for Defense"**—Forrest Whitaker plays a passive man who is forced to take a stand on civil rights after he's illegally arrested.

March 28, **"Heart of a Stranger"**—Jane Seymour portrays a woman who's given a second lease on life.

March 29, **"Redeemer"**—Matthew Modine is a professor and author who crosses paths with a convicted prisoner and learns valuable lessons about forgiveness and salvation.

WHITAKER. Plays a passive man who takes a stand on civil rights.

Beginning March 18, Hallmark will also be screening "Two Twisted" at 11 p.m. Sundays. The dark anthology in the tradition of "The Twilight Zone" features two self-contained stories per episode. The March 18 episode is about missing objects in a newlyweds' home, and a fidgety guard who gets a distress call from his "tormentor."

Art haven satisfies the senses

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

ARTWALK IS A GALLERY THAT displays the works of contemporary artists and the masters, as well. Sonny Dimalanta runs it with his wife, Offie, and son Jeff.

Relationship

Of all the art forms, painting establishes a relationship between the art piece and its audience.

Sonny says that a work of art on canvas never fails to satisfy the senses; the experience, in fact, can be described as spiritual or transcendental. Through the years, he acquired paintings that shaped his aesthetics. A good painting appreciates in value over time—which is why demand for it never wanes.

Investment

Sonny further adds that the value of a painting is never fixed. Someone once said that a painting's worth really depends on how much a buyer is willing to pay for it. How much does one pay for a Van Gogh, a Picasso, a Gustav Klint, an Amorsolo, or an Anita Magsaysay-Ho?

Those artists didn't have an idea how much their paintings would sell—until patrons quoted those pricey figures! That, Sonny says, is investment.

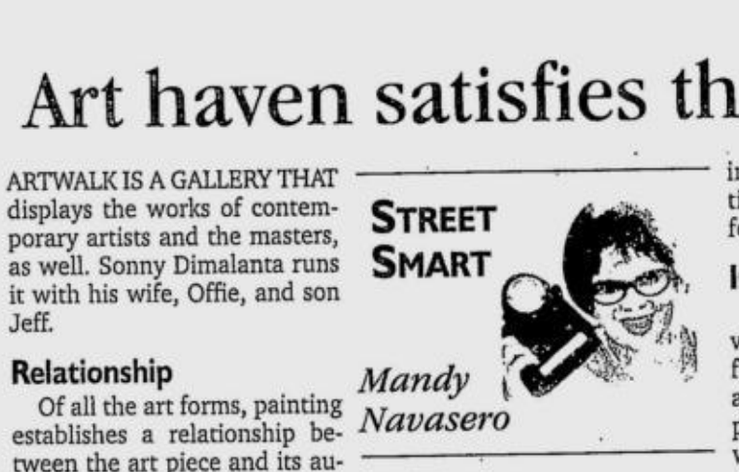
Two decades ago, Sonny acquired a beautiful painting. When he looks at it now, he still sees something new everyday. Paintings don't lose their charm. He hopes that many more people will be gifted with the joy that a painting brings.

Artwalk is located at the second floor of LRI Business Plaza on Reposo st., Bel-Air II, Makati City.

* * *

Join the Mandy Navasero Batanes Photoworkshop from April 12 to 15, or from May 6 to 10. The group will check in at the Batanes Seaside Lodge and Restaurant, which boasts of priceless views from its windows.

Call 899-1767, or e-mail mandynavasero@yahoo.com.



THE DIMALANTAS. The value of a good painting appreciates over time.

Students dominate CCP tilt for alternative films

By Rica Arevalo

LAST MONTH, WE WERE GLAD to take part in the 19th Cultural Center of Philippines Awards for Alternative Film and Video. The ceremony was held outdoors at the CCP Production Design Center on a breezy, starry night.

The first order of the night was the inauguration of the CCP Film Archive. Doy del Mundo, chair of the cinema division of the NCCA, presented a ceremonial film reel to CCP President Nestor Jardin, Nanding Josef and Sid Hildawa.

Former awardees

The winners were mostly students from different universities. Former awardees included Kidlat Tahimik, Mark Meily, Ditsi Carolino, Rox Lee and Ellen Ramos. Before Cinemalaya and Cinema One became popular, the Gawad CCP was the competition independent filmmakers vied for.

In the short film category, judges Ronald Arguelles, Quark Henares and Raymond Lee chose Jerrold Tarog's 10-minute video, "Carpool."

Among 30 entries in the documentary category, Nick Deocampo, Monster Jimenez and I picked "Medalawna" by Michael Christian Cardoz and Lorena Flor Dating. What struck us was its subject matter: It tells the life of Inday Liit, a *biba* little girl, using a cemetery as backdrop. She lives her dramatic, colorful life with wit and vigor.

DEL MUNDO (left) with Josef, Jardin and Hildawa.

Indie rock band

In the animation category, the jury, composed of Vic Acedillo, Sigfreid Barros Sanchez and Mike Sandejas, chose Paraluman Cruz's "Dream Systems," a music video in animation made for the indie rock band, The Purple Chickens.

Experimental

The best experimental video prize was awarded to Bryan Quesada's "Transcendental Progression." A special award was given to Antoinette Jadaone's "Saling Pusa" for best work by/for/on children. Regional winners were Iloilo's "Syokoy" by Ray Defante Gibraltar, Cotabato's "Walai" by Adjani Arumpac, and Cebu's "Ang Pagbalik" by Publio Briones III.

Truth and consequence

From page I2

covered by the false ego that defends itself when under attack. If an accusation is raised when you make a mistake, the false ego reacts.

The parents' false ego comes into play when an accusation is made against their children. We're not perfect, so we must learn from our mistakes—and from our children's, as well.

3. Sometimes, love is tough. Loving means instilling discipline and truthfulness in our children. A sage once said to a mother, "You can't just be a friend—you *have* to be a parent! You have to be firm." Good parenting means teaching spiritual values and instilling in your kids the importance of responsibility.

4. Holy books state that the parents' first disciples are their children. It's the parents' duty to teach words of wisdom to their kids and show them exemplary deeds.

LIFESTYLE / C1 Sunday, March 18, 2007 ★★ 14 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 100 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Pleasant surprises and sordid shocks in Part II of Lifestyle's scrutinous review of the fitting rooms at popular fashion shops and department stores.

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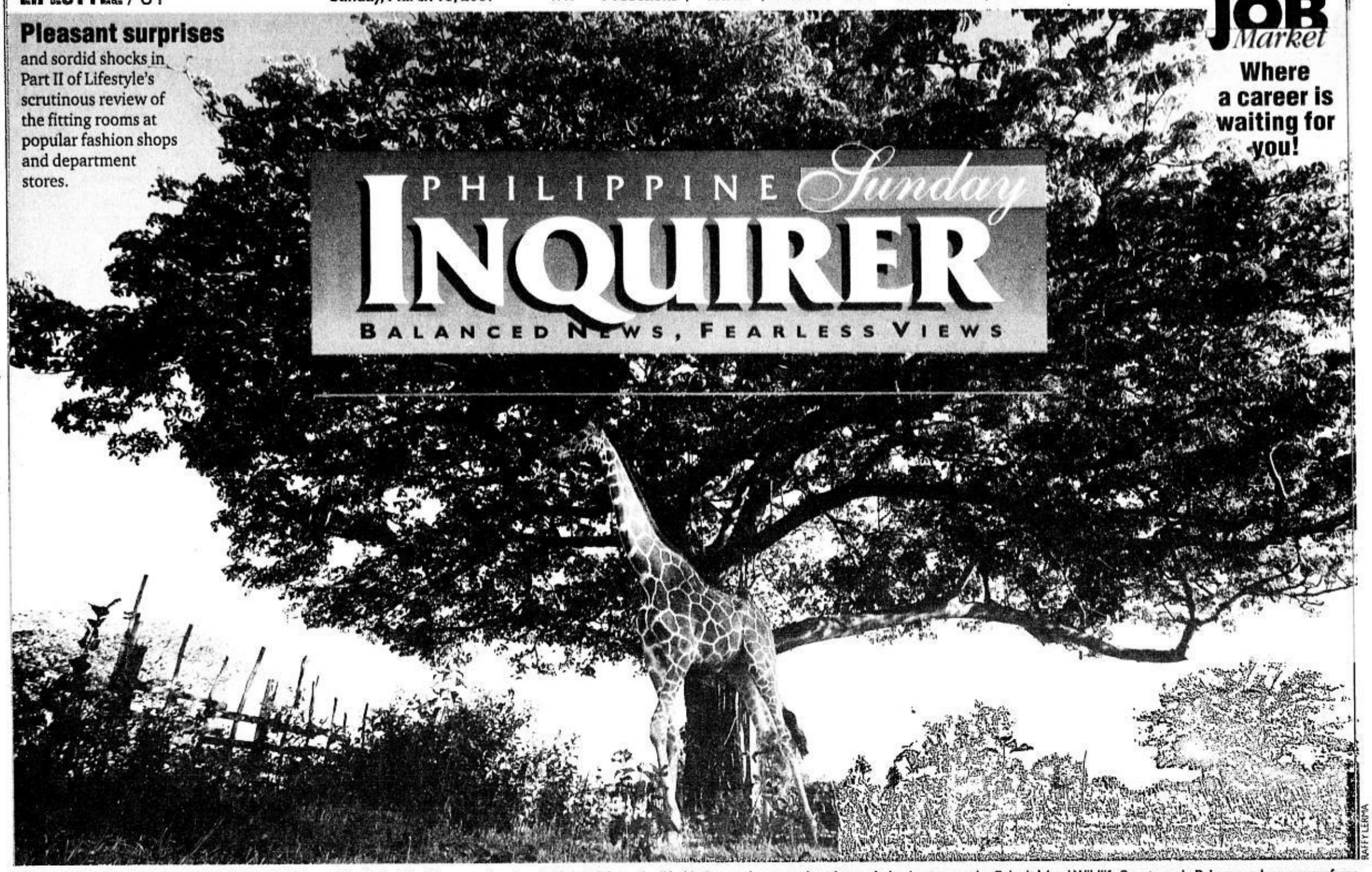

RAFFY LERMA

WHY IS THIS GIRAFFE NAMED ATONG ANG? (Story below). Just like his namesake, the giraffe is in "detention" behind an enclosure under a huge, sheltering tree at the Calauit Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Palawan as he recovers from a leg injury. The 3,700-ha game reserve stocked with animals from 8 African species was created by President Marcos for son Bongbong so he could go on safari without leaving home. The reserve is now also home to endangered species.

'Let's focus on plus points'

TIME OUT TO CELEBRATE GENERATION NEXT
President Arroyo is the special guest at the home of INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and husband Philip at the christening on Saturday of their third son Nicholas Alexander Maximillian. EDWIN BACASMAS

Ms Arroyo also says Pinoy can't be beat in productivity

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS UNPERTURBED by criticism from some US officials and lawmakers about the political killings, and intends to keep her focus on the Philippines' plus points.

"No one can beat the Philippines when it comes to fiscal discipline, and the Filipino people when it comes to productivity and excellence," she said in a speech at the inauguration of the P9.1-million Sulipan Bridge in Pampanga.

"We are keeping pace with the world in all aspects of economic and political stability, shoring up the welfare of the people, expanding democratic space and hitting hard on the

LET'S/ A6

KAPATIRAN

Candidates for Senate in alphabetical order

Martin "Dr. B" Bautista
Born Sept. 22, 1962, Quezon City; married. **Education:** State University of New York, Brooklyn, Internal Medicine; UP, Medicine. **Occupation:** Physician. **Advocacy:** OFWs, health care

Zosimo Jesus "Jess" Paredes II
Born May 27, 1948, Manila; married. **Education:** Baguio Colleges, Law; PMA, 1971. **Occupation:** Lawyer. **Advocacy:** good governance, principled leadership

Adrian "Dado" Sison
Born March 2, 1956, Manila; married. **Education:** UP Law, Ateneo de Manila U, Interdisciplinary Studies. **Occupation:** Lawyer, broadcaster. **Advocacy:** income tax cuts, clean air, water resource development

2007 is for Remembering Ramon Magsaysay
LEPO
August 31, 1907 - March 17, 1957

Nestor Mata: Lone survivor longs for leader like Magsaysay

By TJ Burgonio

IN THE EARLY HOURS OF MARCH 17, 1957, journalist Nestor Mata, dead tired from a day-long coverage in Cebu City, was dozing off in his seat on the flight back to Manila when the plane suddenly plowed through tree tops and slammed into a mountain.

LONE SURVIVOR/ A13

PMA's Magnificent 7 now Sisters of Traveling Grey Pants

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—TEN years ago, they were celebrities at the Philippine Military Academy.

They were known as the "Magnificent Seven"—the first women to enter and graduate from the PMA as beneficiaries of the Women in Development and Nation-building Act (Republic Act No. 7192).

When the women attended the "beast barracks" (the reception where aspiring cadets are subjected to physical and mental tests) in April 1993, the upperclassmen did not quite know whether to use kid gloves.

There was no female tactical officer

PMA'S/ A13

Giraffe named Atong Ang also 'detained'

By Tarra Quismundo

CALAUIT ISLAND, PALAWAN—EVEN in the wilds of Northern Palawan, "Atong Ang" has to endure "detention."

Since December, the four-year-old giraffe—namesake of the jailed gambling buddy of deposed President Joseph "Erap" Estrada—has been limping around in a 3,000-square-meter enclosure at the Calauit Game Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary.

Atong, named for his checkered good looks, is recovering from a leg injury, which has made it dangerous for him to roam the park with the 25 other giraffes, including his best buds Erap, named after Estrada, and Jinggoy, named after Estrada's son, the senator.

Turning 5 soon, Atong is the offspring of the park's dominant male giraffe, Max and Eva.

"There was a tour at the time and I saw a group of giraffes crossing the

GIRAFFE/ A5

Bro. Mike to endorse 12 Senate candidates, no actors among them

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

TOO BAD FOR SENATORIAL aspirants Cesar Montano and Richard Gomez.

BRO. MIKE/ A5

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Cocoy Laurel sings

Broadway's best on March 28 at the Cultural Center to raise funds to build homes for Gawad Kalinga's Doy Laurel Village in Batangas.

ENTERTAINMENT / I-8

At a Vietnamese orphanage, Angelina Jolie is just a regular gal even as she adopts 3-year-old Pax

SUNDAY BIZ / B1

CEOs of RP's largest corporations have a ball behind the lens as members of the Camera Club of the Philippines

Pinay from Baguio grows roots in the West Bank

By Lina Sagaral Reyes
Contributor

BURQA, WEST BANK—THE GRAPEVINES began to leaf a week ago and the tender buds were ripe for picking. She told her daughter Fateen to harvest some by twilight.

Later in the evening, she blanched the leaves and arranged them in stacks on a huge tin platter. She began wrapping a ready mix of *basmati* rice, bits of lamb sprinkled with spices and a little olive oil and butter, in a grape leaf.

"This way. Then, you fold, that way," said Vivian Guerrero-Jabbar, 39. "Like how we make *suman* and *lumpia*," she added, referring to the sticky rice wrapped in coconut leaf and the spring rolls. Or the way Filipino grandmothers rolled tobacco leaf to smoke.

Soon, a bundle of grape-leaf rolls was piled on the tray, waiting to be cooked in

PINAY/ A6

VIVIAN GUERRERO-JABBAR has braved curfews, closures, roadblocks, smoke bombs and gunfire. Behind her are stencils of recent Palestinian martyrs.

LINA SAGARAL-REYES

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SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao and Western Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/03/17/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

PNP: No need to revive dead law

By Alcuin Papa

DISPUTING THE CALL OF ARMED FORCES OF the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon for the revival of the Cold War-era Anti-Subversion Law, the Philippine National Police yesterday said that was no need to "resurrect a dead law."

PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao told the INQUIRER yesterday the newly-minted Human Security Act, otherwise known as the antiterrorism bill, would be an adequate tool in the fight against communist insurgents and terrorists.

"We don't have to resurrect a dead law. There is already a new law, the Human Security Act. The new law is sufficient," Pagdilao said.

Under the new law set to take effect after the May elections, Pagdilao said, any person or group that commits acts of terrorism as defined by the law may be considered a terrorist.

"The new law gives the government a chance to declare a certain group doing certain acts as a terrorist organization. If any group commits terror acts that are defined under the new law, then they will be considered a terror group," Pagdilao said.

He also pointed out that Republic Act No. 1700, or the Anti-Subversion Law enacted in 1957 following the Huk rebellion, was repealed in 1992, virtually legalizing the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

The law had made it a crime to be a member of the CPP.

"Under the old law, any group or persons could be outlawed by the government even without the benefit of a trial. Mere membership (in the CPP) was enough," Pagdilao said.

Only an act of Congress could resurrect the law, Pagdilao added.

On Thursday, Esperon had said he wanted the Anti-Subversion Law revived so that the government could again outlaw the CPP and its "front" organizations.

Malacañang has said it is not keen on the idea of outlawing the CPP again. But it also said it was open to reviewing the law in the search for ways to end the decades-long Maoist insurgency.

Also yesterday, the PNP welcomed an offer from United States officials to train 40 PNP investigators involved in probing the deaths of militants.

PNP Director General Oscar Calderon said US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Eric John made the offer on March 14 during a hearing on the extrajudicial killings in the US Senate.

"This development is an encouraging gesture of support for the efforts of PNP Task Force Usig in seeking the truth and prosecuting suspects behind the unsolved cases of slain militant activists," Calderon said.

Task Force Usig is the PNP unit formed to investigate the killing of militants.

Calderon said the training of the investigators would be a "capacity-building measure to enable them to effectively pursue unsolved cases of slain militant activists, journalists and other high-profile personalities."

He also said the hearings in the US Congress regarding the extrajudicial killings in the country would actually help in clearing the problem of the unsolved killings and in overcoming the problems that hinder the solution of the crimes.

"For one, the lack of witnesses could be offset by forensic evidence that can be adduced through modern technical equipment and highly skilled crime laboratory technicians," Calderon said.

He also assured the US government that the PNP's "underlying mission is to solve these murders so that those responsible will be held liable and suffer the consequences of their acts."

Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, PNP deputy chief for administration, flew to the US to assist the Philippine Embassy in presenting the PNP's findings on the killings. Philippine officials were not called at the hearing, however.

Militant human rights group said some 830 militants had been killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo came into power in 2001.

But the PNP said the number was only 118.

Activist's wife fears for husband's safety

By Fe Zamora

TALKING ABOUT THE SPATE OF POLITICAL killings and disappearances makes freelance writer and editor Fides Lim tremble.

Her fear haunts her even in her sleep. She wakes up at dawn sweating and shaking over what fate may await her husband Vicente Ladlad, a political prisoner tortured during the martial law years who is now one of 52 activists being hunted again in line with Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon's pledge to cripple the insurgency before President Macapagal-Arroyo's term ends in 2010.

With the exception of Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, who gave himself up to the authorities on Friday, Ladlad and 50 others are now the subject of an intensive police manhunt after a Leyte judge ordered their arrest in connection with the alleged killing of suspected spies in Inopacan, Leyte, 22 years ago.

Ocampo and Ladlad have denied the charges, saying they were all in military jails at the time the so-called "killing fields" happened from May to June 1985. Exiled Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP) founding chair Jose Ma. Sison, also on the list, was likewise in prison.

"My husband is a chronic asthmatic. He does not own a gun, he does not know how to fire a gun," said Lim.

'Don't torture them'

Her voice filled with anguish, Lim said she only wanted to send a message to the authorities through the INQUIRER: "I'm appealing to all of you, please don't torture Vic, Satur and the others, please."

In behalf of the families of the other activists, Lim appealed to President Arroyo to "instruct the armed forces to strictly abide by legal procedure and ensure the observance of Ladlad's rights and that of his coaccused activists should anyone of them be arrested."

Ocampo and Ladlad were among the many political prisoners reported by the international human rights group Amnesty International to have been tortured by the military during the martial law regime.

Lim said her husband was a political prisoner at Camp Nakar in Quezon from 1983 to 1986.

Lim herself was named a respondent in the new multiple murder complaint, but her name and that of three others were dropped for lack of "substantial evidence." Multiple murder is a nonbailable offense.

Sison, Ocampo, Ladlad and the other respondents in the case were alleged to have been the members of the Central Committee, the policy-making body of the CPP, at the time of the purge.

Peace consultant

Ladlad, a peace talks consultant for the National Democratic Front which represents the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, was released from jail following the Edsa People Power revolution in February 1986. In 1999, military agents picked up Ladlad near the Bayan Muna office in Quezon City. A court ordered him released days later because it was shown that he was arrested without a valid warrant.

Amnesty International and other international human rights groups have repeatedly expressed grave concern that substandard investigations and sparse convictions of state perpetrators of human rights violations were giving way to "a climate of impunity that emboldens security personnel to commit further violations in the context of anti-insurgency operations."

Abu member, Crame escapee, recaptured

By Julie Alipala, *Inquirer Mindanao*, and Alcuin Papa, *in Manila*

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A MEMBER of the Abu Sayyaf extremist group who escaped with Indonesian bomber Fathur Roman al-Ghozi from Camp Crame jail in 2003 was recaptured in Isabela, Basilan, on Friday.

Omar Opik Lasal—who goes by the aliases Merang Abante, Criz Lazar and Amba—was arrested at about 3 a.m. in Barangay Sta. Cruz in Isabela, by a joint team from the Isabela and provincial police and the Marines, said Senior Insp. Parson Asadil, acting Isabela police chief.

Asadil said Lasal was involved in various kidnappings perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf and was also the main suspect in the assassination of a Basilan policeman earlier this year.

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, the regional police commander, said Lasal, who has two arrest warrants for kidnapping and serious illegal detention issued against him, was brought to Zamboanga City for interrogation and turned over to a court here.

However, Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar tried to get Lasal released from police custody.

Akbar said Lasal had been cooperating in the government campaign against terror and had been under the Department of Justice's witness protection program since October 2003.

"There is no case against him. He has no offense, why is he being arrested?" Akbar said.

Party-list Rep. Mujiv Hataman said Akbar had been pressuring the Isabela police to release Lasal.

He said Lasal worked for the governor as one of his bodyguards.

Akbar said he was only trying to help an innocent man.

Lasal said in a phone interview that he was no longer a member of the Abu Sayyaf.

He said he was a military intelligence agent connected with the Military Intelligence Company (Mico). He claimed to have been instrumental in the success of several operations against his former comrades and had the papers to prove it.

Lasal escaped from a maximum security cell inside Camp Crame, the headquarters of the Philippine National Police, in July 2003 together with al-Ghozi and Abdulmukim Edris, another Abu Sayyaf member.

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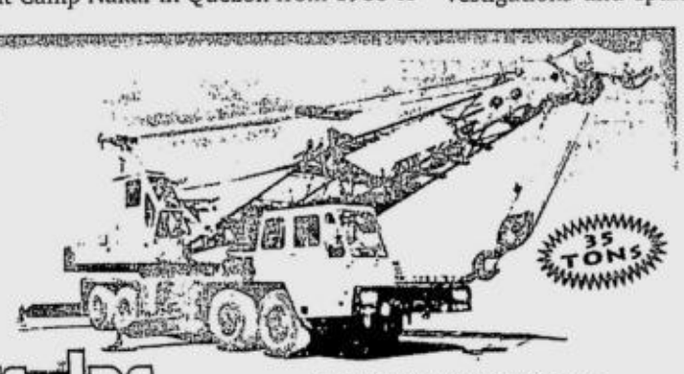

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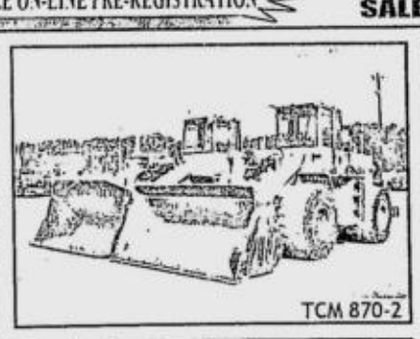
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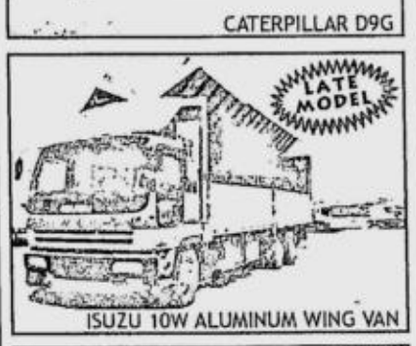

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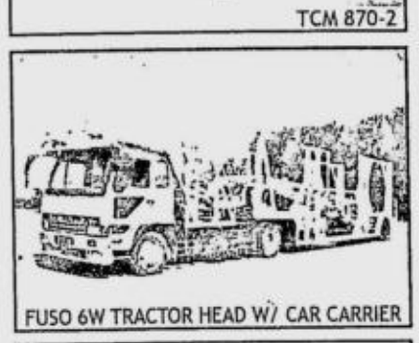
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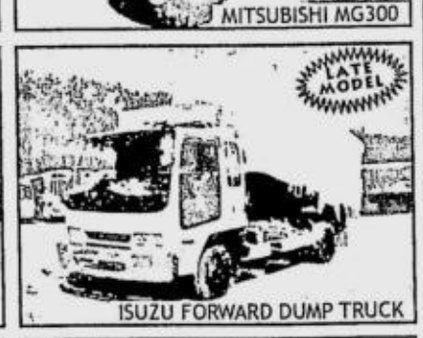

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Palawan grenade blast kills 8

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—EIGHT PEOple were killed, including two children aged 10 and 14, and 25 were severely injured in an accidental grenade explosion during a scuffle at a birthday party in a remote village in Palawan on Friday.

The victims were the guests of Tatan Anicete, president of the Commando Brotherhood, who was celebrating his birthday in a basketball court in Barangay Canipaan, Rizal town, a five-hour drive from the provincial capital of Puerto Princesa City.

Senior Supt. Dennis Peña, Palawan police director, said the incident happened at about 1 a.m. when a member of the brotherhood disarmed another member, Toto "Vilma" Johori, after the latter became drunk and unruly.

Apparently embarrassed, Johori went home and returned with a grenade.

Another member of the group tried to grab the grenade but it went off during the scuffle, killing Johori and four others outright. Three other people died later at a clinic.

"This is the result of a simple misunderstanding between a group of drunken people," said Senior Supt. Napoleon Cachuela, regional police chief, belying reports it was a terrorist attack.

Members of the Commando Brotherhood style themselves as soldiers, often wearing military uniforms and carrying hidden firearms, Cachuela said.

Peña identified the fatalities aside from Johori as Marcial Cadangug, Marlon Sarasa, Jose Ramos, Junjun Bonbon and Teodoro Garcia.

Also killed were Bimbo Umbing, 10, and Cornelio Bormas, 14.

Some of the wounded were identified as Recardo Catarungan, Moasang Pering, Julie Agbise, Bimbo Tondeng, Perlito Salvador, Joel Escubin, Michael Alim, Julie Jaden, Eling Mangalan, Jurain Empang, Ode Jaden, Harold Jaden, Ogie Tatlonghari, Gregorio Magbanua, Talidok Tahil and Rocky Ilasus.

The explosive reportedly slipped from the hands of one of the group members who had tried to take it away from Johori, Peña said. ***Marlon Ramos and Robert Bagalay, Inquirer Southern Luzon, with AP***

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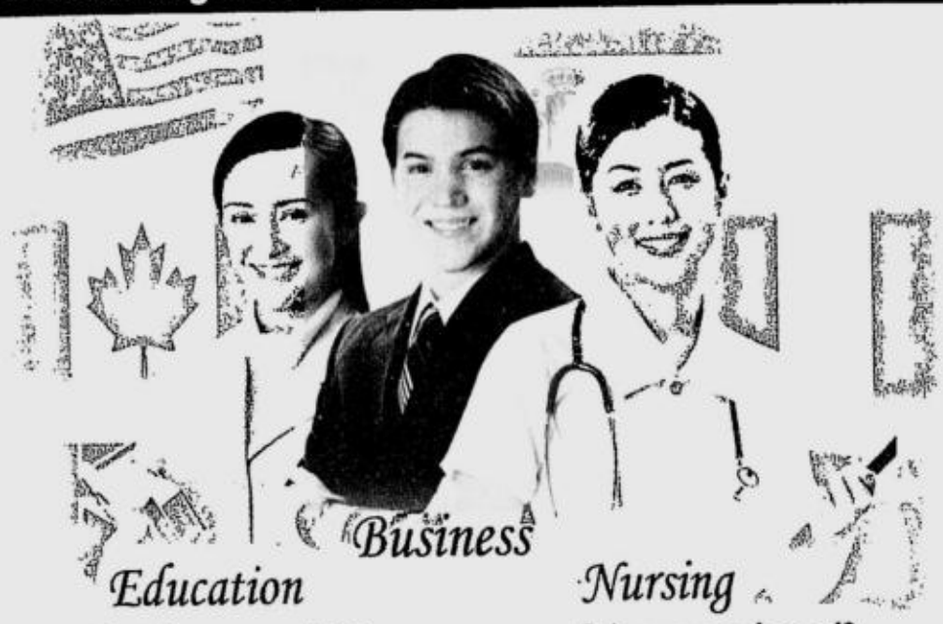

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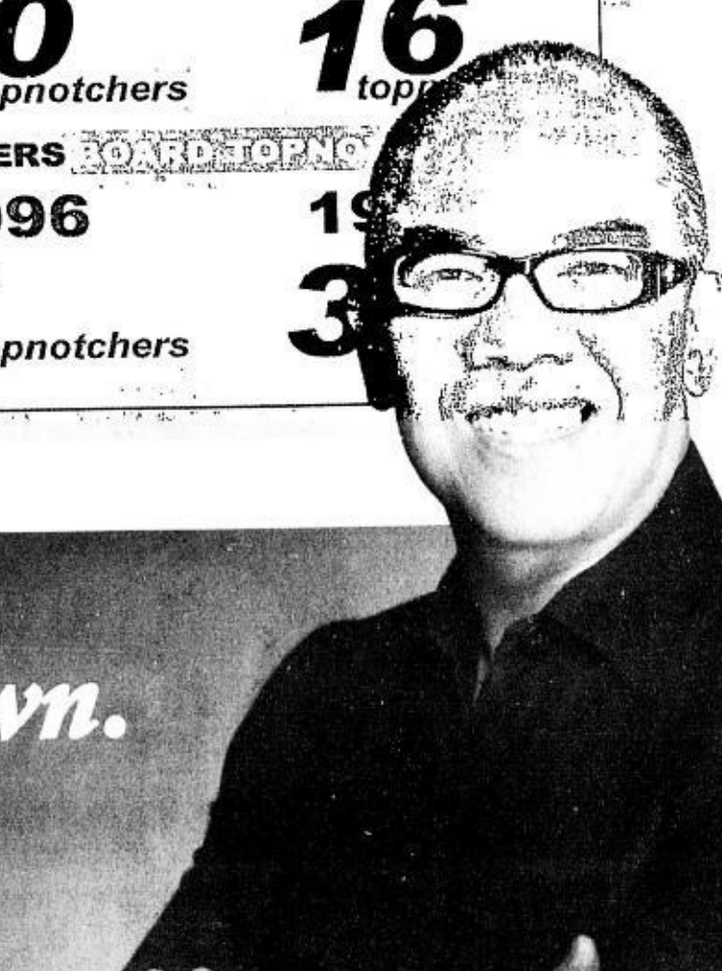

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Bro. Mike to endorse 12 Senate candidates, no actors

From page A1

To the acronym-wielding evangelist Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde, whose endorsement candidates would give their eyeteeth for, "A" is definitely not for "actor."

"The training of actors is different from the training of legislators, and a senator cannot be unprepared for legislation because the work of the Senate helps shape the course of our nationhood," said Velarde, the influential head of the El Shaddai charismatic group.

A is therefore for "ability" in Velarde's book, being one of the qualities that he said he is looking for in this year's crop of senatorial aspirants hoping to get his endorsement.

'Buhay'

The preacher has let it be known that he will be choosing 12 candidates to endorse to his 5 million followers.

Velarde said he would be guided by the acronym Buhay, which is also the name of the El Shaddai party-list group that is participating in the May 14 elections.

B is for bravery, in terms of fighting for what is right for the country; U for unwavering principles; H for honesty; A for ability, and Y for Yahweh, or being God-fearing.

Velarde concedes that these guidelines are tough.

"Strictly speaking, if we enforce these guidelines we cannot find [candidates who will pass the test]," he said.

Velarde cited Sen. Joker Arroyo, a reelectionist on Team Unity, whom the El Shaddai leader considers to be brave and hinted that he would support.

"Why is he not speaking on the political killings? If you have unwavering principles, what is wrong is wrong," Velarde said.

But then all politicians would flunk the test of unwavering principles, he noted.

Being God-fearing is an important quality Velarde is looking for in a candidate, but he said there could be "varying degrees" of this quality among politicians.

As for A, Velarde made it clear it did not stand for "actor."

He said he did not mean to belittle actors, but he believes their training is not really geared toward the difficult task of lawmaking.

The administration's Team Unity has two show biz personalities—former Sen. Vicente "Tito" Sotto III and Cesar Montano—while actor Richard Gomez is running as an independent.

'Nut'

But Velarde also hinted that he would not vote straight for any one ticket but would choose and pick from Team Unity and the Genuine Opposition.

He said his ticket would be the "NUT," for National Unity Ticket. He said he would clue in his followers as to his personal choices on Easter Sunday, when the El Shaddai stages a big gathering.

"I will personally choose 12 and eventually I might [endorse them to El Shaddai members]. I will give them an acronym," Velarde said.

According to El Shaddai insiders, Velarde usually issues a sample ballot containing the names of the anointed candidates.

Giraffe named Atong Ang also 'detained'

From page A1

dirt road. I noticed Atong lagging behind and when our vehicle approached, I saw a length of rope tied around his left front leg," said Benito Sario, the park's tour guide of 30 years.

"I reported it to the park's operation center. We organized an operation to capture the giraffe and put him in this exercise yard," said Sario, referring to the wood-fenced enclosure which serves as a refuge where Atong could recover.

Cruel thing

He suspects that Atong might have stepped on the rope which was meant to be a snare.

Who could have done such a cruel thing?

Sario said he had no idea, but in recent years the park has had to contend with people trying to settle on the island and grow crops, despite government regulations.

"The rope cut deep through his leg and we really struggled to pull it out... Since he was placed here and treated, there has been a big improvement in his condition," Sario said.

A horse with no name

A caretaker looks after the injured giraffe every day, feeding him leaves from his favorite tree and spraying his swollen leg with medication once a day. Keeping Atong company is a horse (with no name), who is also recovering from an injury.

Back to the wild

Sario could not say when the giraffe would be strong enough to be released back to the wild but he said the animal would be monitored closely.

Giraffes are among the attractions in this 3,760-hectare island preserve, a park created by deposed strongman Ferdinand Marcos in 1976 when he received the exotic animals as gifts from the government of Kenya.

Four kinds of antelopes (bushbucks, waterbucks, elands, impalas) graze the preserve along with giraffes and zebras. They roam the wilds along with Palawan's indigenous animals like the Calamian deer, mouse deer, Palawan bearcat and the wild boar.

Like Safari tours

The Calauit preserve is considered a unique ecotourism destination in Asia as it offers an experience similar to safari tours in Africa. A tour costs P250 for Filipino tourists while foreigners pay P350.

The park is an hour-long boat ride from Coron town in Busuanga, an island accessible via a one-hour plane ride from Manila.

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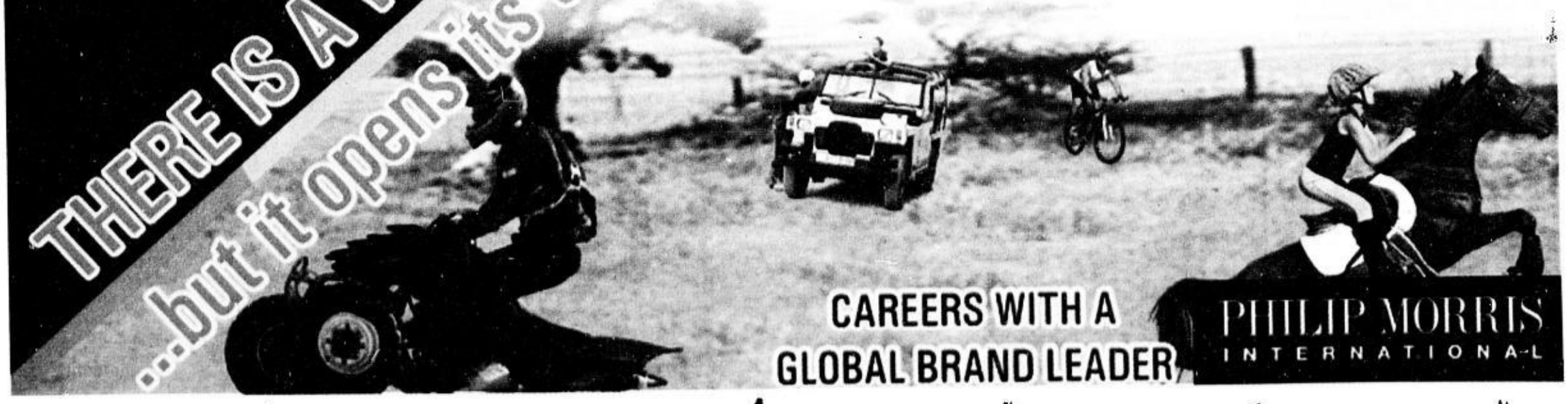

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'Let's focus on plus points,' Ms Arroyo urges

From page A1

threat of terror," she said.

Instead of dwelling on the inquiry of the US Senate foreign relations subcommittee on Asia into the unabated killings of journalists and leftist activists in the country, Ms Arroyo chose to speak about the steady flow of foreign investments as evidence of world confidence in the Philippines.

"Political issues are for my spokesman (Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye) to answer," she said when the INQUIRER sought her comment yesterday on the US Senate probe which concluded that her administration had not done enough to stop the killings.

Bunye said RP-US relations remained "steadfast and firm despite the issues that tend to invite transient controversy."

"Our ties have withstood the test of time through generations past and will never be dispirited as the Philippine-American alliance is anchored on the overall platform of democracy and prosperity, in the fight against terror and poverty. We take the interest shown by the United States in the Philippine human rights situation as a constructive gesture coming from a time-honored ally," Bunye said.

"This government has never faltered in its adherence to rule of law and respect of human rights and is closely in step with the world human rights community," he said.

Confident of growth

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita expressed confidence that US aid would "grow and [not be] tied" to the issue of the political killings.

"Perhaps some US military assistance could be dedicated toward human rights training in the field and the needs of the new Armed Forces of the Philippines Human Rights Office," he said in a statement.

Ermita said that at the hearing in Washington, a US State Department official had said: "We stand ready to be of additional assistance to the Philippine authorities."

"The UN (United Nations) and other diplomats have also expressed their desire to increase assistance [to the Philippines]," Ermita said.

He said Philippine government and US Embassy officials in Manila were "holding discussions on what further assistance to provide [the country] toward the fight against unlawful killings."

'Why are they here?'

"The developments in the US are another sign of the international community's support for the Philippines in fighting these human rights violations. They are not out to condemn us, they want to learn more so they can see how to help," Ermita said.

The President cited the $100-million Toyota transmission plant in Laguna, the $150-million expansion of Unilab and the $300-million Hanjin shipyard in Subic as among the big-ticket investments that showed confidence in the Philippines.

"So why are they here? Why is Toyota putting its transmission plant here? Why is Hanjin here [whose shipyard in Subic] is the fourth biggest in the world? It's because of the confidence in our economy, because of our fiscal reforms, and these reforms are creating jobs," she told the INQUIRER.

In her speech in Pampanga, the President said: "The closing budget gap is fueling the confidence that creates jobs, and we are speaking of well-paying jobs as evident in the finding that Philippine salaries' growth is the third fastest in the Asia-Pacific. And we are proving that good salaries are not a bar to investment but a guarantee of more profit to the firms that are putting a stake in our country."

Ms Arroyo also said that to achieve economic strength, the government had to make sure that the fruits of economic growth were felt in the countryside through better infrastructure, quality education and health services to the people.

She promised to plug revenue leaks, prosecute tax cheats and smugglers, address corruption in the bureaucracy and crack down on "wayward spending" in the government.

Pinay from Baguio grows roots in strife-torn West Bank

From page A1

simmering lamb stock with ripe tomatoes in a pot.

Vivian must have made *meishi betuni* every summer until fall, wrapping rice grains and lamb bits in grape leaves for the hundredth time for the past 10 years since she first came to live in the Occupied Palestine Territories in 1996.

Said the city slicker: "Honestly, I was a bit disappointed when I first came here. *Tubong-syudad ako, talagang laking* Cavite at Baguio, and I was used to the conveniences of a city lifestyle.

"I never dreamed of ending up in such a rural place as Burqa. That's where I learned that silence is deafening."

Yet, far away from home, she has hung tough and thrived, though she may be the last to admit it.

"But I learned to appreciate the quiet, the scenery and my friends here," she said.

She has to. Then, as now, she's among the very few Filipinos in the strife-wracked West Bank.

She had heard of other Filipinos—a surgeon in the neighborhood of Raffidya in Nablus, a nun in a Catholic monastery on the outskirts of Jenin (or was it in Jericho?), a humanitarian worker in East Jerusalem, an English professor in Bethlehem and hundreds of househelp and caregivers in Jerusalem and, beyond the wall, in Israel.

But she has yet to meet any of them.

Disco in Baguio

In Baguio 16 years ago, Vivian met Abdel Jabbar in a disco.

Abdel, then a junior engineering student at St. Louis University, eyed the petite girl among a group of women near the table where he sat with other Palestinian students.

Vivian was on an all-women night out, just after her freshman exams and had just broken up with her nth boyfriend. Inside, she was barely on the mend then.

Abdel noted, and he would tell Vivian this on a dinner date later, that she was the only one who did not smoke and who had a glass of soda while the other women had beer and margaritas.

Having learned about affordable education in the Philippines from Filipino coworkers in Kuwait, and with life in occupied Palestine so volatile, Abdel's brother had decided to send his younger brothers to study engineering in Baguio.

Vivian thought she knew what she was getting into when she decided to marry Abdel six months after that first meeting.

"Are you sure this is what you want?" her grandfather demanded. "Do you know that he is a Palestinian, and do you know what that means? He belongs to a people without a country, and they are persecuted, and so when you marry him, you and your children, too, will experience statelessness and suffering with him."

Muslim wedding

But she was young and undaunted, and so they wed in Muslim rites.

Abdel left Baguio as soon as he had gotten his degree and professional license. Vivian began to learn how to cook Palestinian cuisine from the wives of other Palestinians, staying first for two years in Jordan, where Abdel got his first job at a construction firm.

Vivian had embraced Islam back in the Philippines, and the religion became common ground for her and her new community in Burqa. "I did not convert right away. Abdel did not have to convince me. I made the decision when I was ready, and I do not regret making the decision," she said.

It also helped that she's a natural green thumb, and breathed new life to a neglected yard in her in-laws' compound.

It is said that her garden is always a delightful quilt of greens—herbs, vegetables, wild flowers and fruit trees.

Small concessions

Vivian has braved curfews, closures, roadblocks and checkpoints, smoke bombs and gunfire, harassment from Israeli settlers who used to live in the hilltop settlement of Homesh, and even military incursions.

Through the years, she has won small concessions to Western culture—like eating on a low dining table instead of on the floor, cable TV, a cell phone and three cats that "begged to be adopted" last year.

The cats, whom she named Spikey, Sparky and Blackie, appeared one day at their gate. She thinks their owners left them behind in Homesh.

"The kids asked me if we could keep them. I have to be their emissary before their father. Most homes here do not keep pets like dogs and cats," she said.

Greatest fear

But despite Vivian's experiences under the Occupation, she sees the Israeli army as far from a brutal monolith. Rather, for her, it is composed of individual human beings.

Her concerns revolve around her children—two boys and two girls aged 3 to 17. Her present anguish involves her eldest child, Ahmed, who is beginning to foray into politics.

Her greatest fear, like any other mother of Palestinian youth today, is that her son might become a suicide bomber. She wishes that he'd be more apolitical.

"It's the safest stance these days—not to be involved in politics," she said.

But she is aware that every youth that goes to the mosque gets political, if not ideological. Mothers like her find their protective wings too narrow a shield for their sons.

Vivian's worries for her daughters may be put on hold (later perhaps when they are older and will have to wear long robes and veils).

She will worry later about her lack of mobility beyond her village. (She is among the more than 10,000 foreigners married to Palestinians who have not been issued a residency permit and an ID card.

Window to world

Even as she has heard stinging words from neighbors on the hazards posed by television on the children's moral core, Vivian believes that cable TV is her kids' window to the world outside the West Bank.

Ahmed is the undeclared resident censor for his sisters (eight and 12 years old) and brother (four). He would deftly change channels, say from the HBO movie feature "Chocolat" at the beginning of a passionate kissing scene, to the cartoon network's "Flintstones."

(But alone, Ahmed seemed to have the privilege of watching the uncensored portions.)

It is Ahmed who is most Filipino among the siblings, having been born in the Philippines.

Vivian said he was raised on "Eat Bulaga" as well as on *pancit* and *daing*, fried eggs and sausages in the morning.

He asks for food like *nilagang baka*, chicken *tinola*, beef *adobo*, *menudo* and banana cue.

Vivian hopes her son would get to a university in the Philippines and earn a degree like his father.

But he is interested in physics and computer technology, and wants to be a teacher in his village. The Philippines is far from his young mind. He'd rather go to Nablus or Seoul, where, he has heard, Palestinians are studying on scholarships.

Secret code

The kids are multilingual, speaking Arabic, English, Hebrew and Tagalog.

Vivian's Arabic has improved from a list of vegetables and fruits to strings of sentences. She has learned much from daily conversations with her kids. But they keep correcting her grammar.

Tagalog is the family's lingua franca—the secret code that binds its members to the Filipino culture—*gising na, kain na tayo, mano po, alis na kami, Inay, ang baon ko, salamat po, ingat lagi, sige, wow ang sarap, wow ang galing!*

In Tagalog, Vivian sings lullabies and tells the kids folk tales and jokes. It is also for her the language of anger, advice and admonition.

Exotica

The next day, the family went on a picnic at Homesh.

While the others relished brunch of *meishi betuni* beside a pungent bonfire of pine cones and twigs, Vivian gathered plants from the gutted gardens of Orthodox Jewish settlers whose homes were recently dismantled.

No one else had an eye on the Asiatic palms and shrubs with thick leaves, as the other Palestinians were keener on salvaging lumber and water tanks.

Vivian thought, too, that the plants were ignored because they were alien species, needed much water, and therefore might not survive as easily as the native cactus.

But she collected some, anyway, and planted them in empty biscuit cans at home.

Perhaps she sees herself in them. How exotic she is, like them, and yet she has raised a family of her own and found a second home taking root in the rich soil of Palestinian culture.

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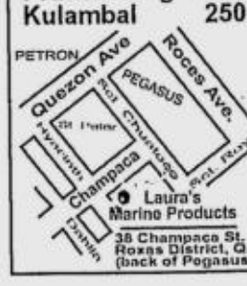

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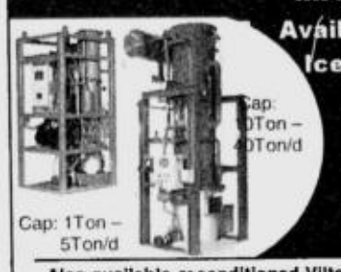

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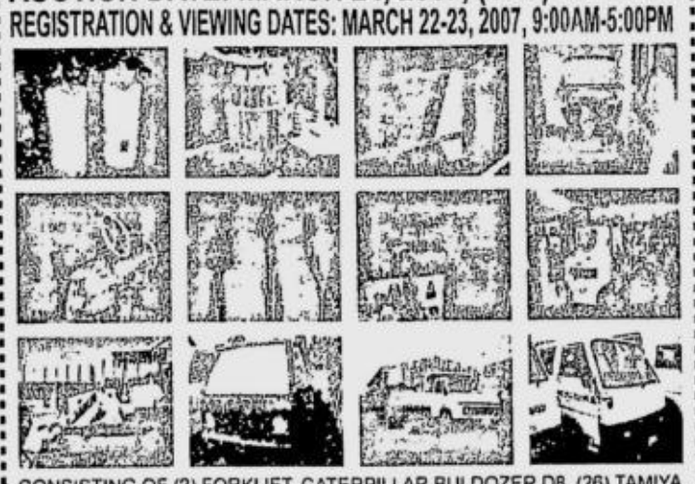

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It's Angara's turn to gripe: Team Unity sked in disarray

By Cynthia D. Balana

TACLOBAN CITY—DESPITE THE vaunted resources at its disposal, grumbling from its senatorial candidates is taking its toll on Team Unity's campaign.

First, actor Cesar Montano had complained about the lack of financial support to run his campaign. He was followed by Sultan Jamalul Kiram who cited the same problem.

Yesterday, reelectionist Sen. Edgardo Angara flared up because of what he described as a "logistical horror" in their campaign sorties.

Angara, team leader of five Team Unity senatorial candidates who arrived here Thursday to campaign, said the Leyte campaign schedules were in disarray.

With Angara were fellow reelectionist Senators Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto, former Presidential Chief of Staff Mike Defensor and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Angara said those handling their sorties in Leyte probably "did not pass a course in geography."

The team campaigned for two days in Tacloban City, one day in Ormoc City and was then asked to join other Team Unity candidates in Iloilo City on Sunday afternoon.

He said Samar should have been included on their schedule since it is connected to Tacloban City by the San Juanico Bridge.

"*Andito na tayo sa* Leyte *bakit hindi tayo pumunta sa* Samar, *eh napakalapit niyan. Tapos doon pa sa* Ormoc, *tapos lipad pa sa* Iloilo, *ano yan* cross country? (We were already in Leyte, why didn't we go to Samar which is very near. Then we went to Ormoc before flying to Iloilo. What's this, a cross-country trips?)" he told reporters here.

"That's a logistical horror. That's crazy. Look, there's no direct flight from Ormoc to Iloilo. Either you go and take a ferry to Cebu and then take a flight from Cebu to Iloilo. *Biro mo yan or bumalik ka sa* Manila (Imagine that. You could go back to Manila.) So you already lose one day," he said.

Angara also learned Recto and Arroyo flew to Davao on Friday to attend the 70th Araw ng Dabaw Fiesta which was not on the official schedule.

"It might appear that we're disrespecting our host here," he said in Filipino.

Asked if he was withdrawing from Team Unity as a result of this, Angara replied: "*Hindi naman* (Not really). I'm only after efficiency because time is of the essence. Tacloban and Samar are connected by San Juanico so why didn't we proceed to Samar? I think we're wasting our time and opportunity. The one who handled it probably didn't pass Geography.

On Friday, Singson left Tacloban for Vigan to host Team Unity senatorial bets who proceeded to Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur.

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Bishop offers to mediate in Negros farmers' land dispute

By TJ Burgonio

A CATHOLIC BISHOP YESTERDAY OFFERED to mediate in talks between two groups of farmers that are both claiming to be the rightful beneficiaries of land in a sugarcane plantation in Negros Occidental.

Bishop Patricio Buzon of Kitankalan, Negros Occidental, made the offer to resolve the standoff when he visited 17 farmers who are on hunger strike outside the Department of Agrarian Reform office in Quezon City in protest of Secretary Nasser Pangandaman's failure to install them and the rest of the 122 beneficiaries on the land.

Buzon told the protesting farmers that both groups should meet and thresh out their differences away from the eyes of the media, according to Rodito Angeles, president of Task Force Mapalad (TFM), the farmers' umbrella organization.

But the beneficiaries were divided on the issue.

Some agreed to the meeting in deference to the bishop, while the others doubted the meeting would result in their installation in a 144-hectare piece of land in Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town.

Backed by soldiers and policemen, Pangandaman was set to install the 122 beneficiaries on the land last March 8, but called it off after hundreds of farm workers belonging to a rival group barricaded the plantation to stop the installation.

Pangandaman said the problem at the plantation was a conflict between two groups of beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

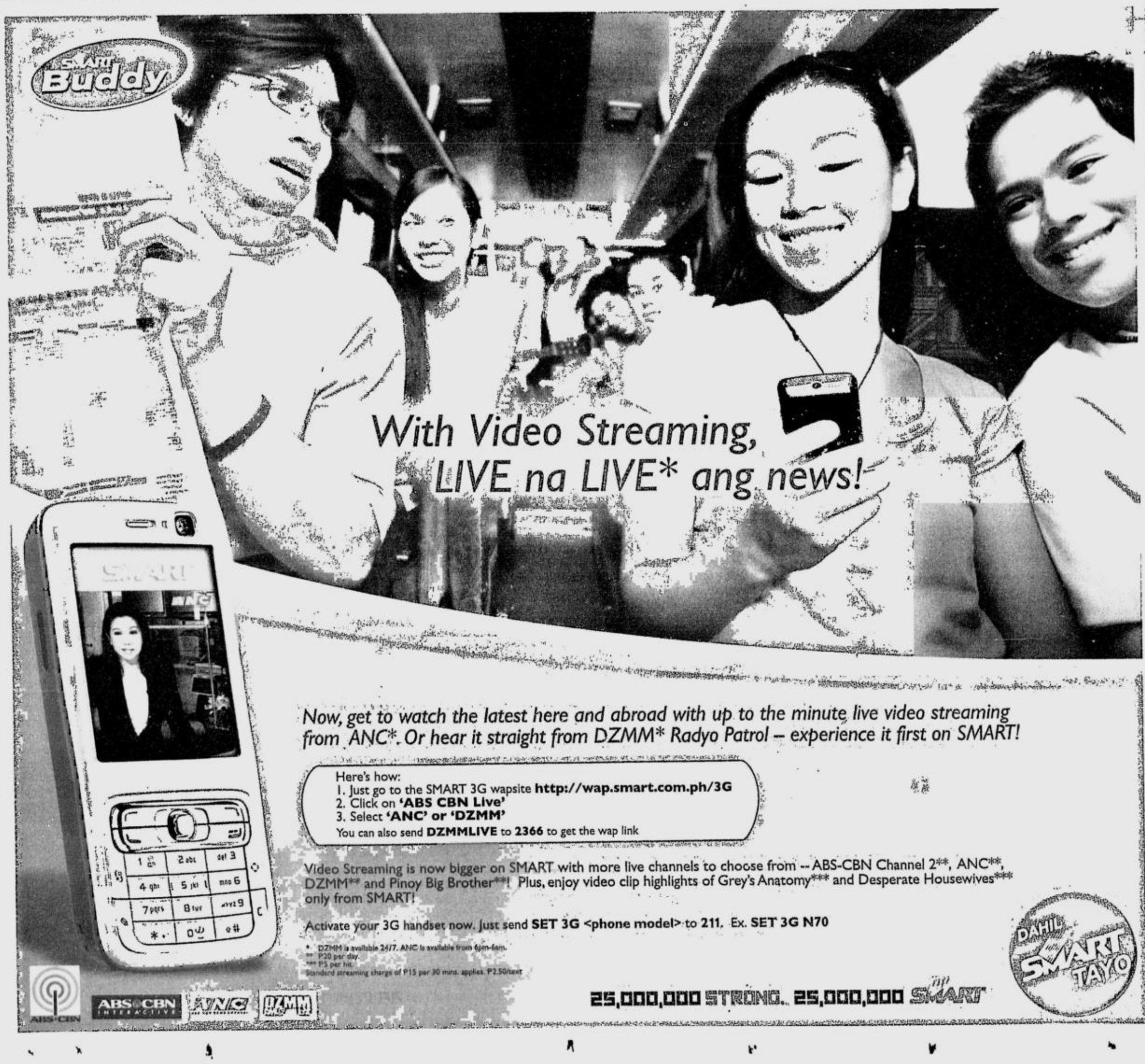
The 122 farmers belonging to TFM were earlier awarded 144 hectares in a prime area of the 420-ha plantation, but 178 workers, who had organized themselves into the Hacienda Malaga Independent Workers Union (HMIWU), claimed that they were the original tillers of the land.

HMIWU said only 57 of the 122 TFM beneficiaries were original tillers of the hacienda.

After a series of failed installations, 21 of the 122 beneficiaries pitched camp outside the DAR office on Feb. 20, and started their hunger strike.

Pangandaman had long given the go-signal to the farmers' installation after the Supreme Court ruled in 2004 that all controversies on agrarian reform fell under DAR's jurisdiction.

The DAR placed the plantation under CARP in 1996 and granted the 122 farmers a collective certificate of land ownership award (Cloa) on the 144-ha six years later, but landowner Roberto Cuenca went to court to question the action.



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US interference?

IT WAS ANOTHER DRAMATIC HEARING IN THE halls of the US Congress, made even more riveting by the calm demeanor of the woman at the center of the hearing. The issue involved the use of violence by government forces and possible treason by high public officials—and all of Washington, D.C., it seemed, had turned out to witness the event, or watch it on screen.

EDITORIAL

No, it was not the US Senate's inquiry into extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, held on March 14 and chaired by Sen. Barbara Boxer of the subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific affairs. Boxer was a calm and forceful presence, too, but that hearing largely went unnoticed in the American press.

What caught the US media's obsessive attention was Victoria Plame Wilson, the former undercover Central Intelligence Agency operative who was "outed" by the Bush administration for what she called "purely political motives." After four years of silence, she finally testified on March 16 before the committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the US House of Representatives.

We point this out because it helps provide some of the context for the Boxer hearing on extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. In the first place, both legislative inquiries took place because the Democrats have regained control of both houses of Congress. Now the machinations of the Bush administration in creating a false, fabricated rationale for invading Iraq in 2003 are under investigation; human rights abuses—not usually high-priority items in the Republican agenda—in countries that receive US aid are also under scrutiny, precisely because the Democrats are back in charge in Congress.

In the second place, both inquiries are a function of the US Congress' check-and-balance role; in other words, their ultimate object of attention is the conduct of the American executive department.

It was church pressure in the United States that led to the Boxer hearing; reports of hundreds of politically motivated assassinations in the Philippines, a number of them involving religious leaders in the countryside, had moved affiliated churches in the United States to press the Senate for an investigation. The Senate finally moved, in large part because the Philippines continues to receive military and other forms of aid from the United States.

Necessarily, a number of those invited to testify belonged to leftist groups in the Philippines, because many of the victims come from their ranks. But top State Department officials Eric John and Jonathan Farrar also testified, as well as other resource persons.

Does the Boxer inquiry constitute interference in Philippine political affairs? We say No, for two specific reasons. We say this despite the well-known fact that the US government still exercises inordinate influence in the Philippines. (To give only one recent example: the Arroyo administration broke Philippine law and trespassed on the independence of the judiciary when it transferred convicted rapist Lance Corporal Daniel Smith to the US embassy without a court order—obviously in a bid to please American officialdom.)

We've been here before. We've welcomed official US interest in Philippine affairs before—during the Marcos years, when seemingly all legal avenues for redress were blocked, and the dictatorship controlled mass media. That is why it strikes us as absurd that administration allies and Marcos oppositionists like Rep. Antonio Cuenco and Sen. Joker Arroyo shout foreign intervention now; have they forgotten Stephen Solarz and other friends of Philippine democracy?

The crisis is out of control. How many political assassinations does it take before we can call the killing spree a crisis of international dimension? State Department officials who testified at the hearing were dependably diplomatic when they listed the initiatives President Macapagal-Arroyo had taken to stop the killings. But the reality is, well, murderous. Yes, the President invited the UN's special rapporteur; but Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who will implement many of the initiatives, is actively hostile to the envoy and his preliminary report. Yes, the President created the Melo commission; but it took intense pressure before she allowed the commission's report to be made public. Above all, the military top brass remains in denial. Pressure from representatives of our main military ally may yet change that.

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readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph • Tel. No. 897-8808, Loc. 342

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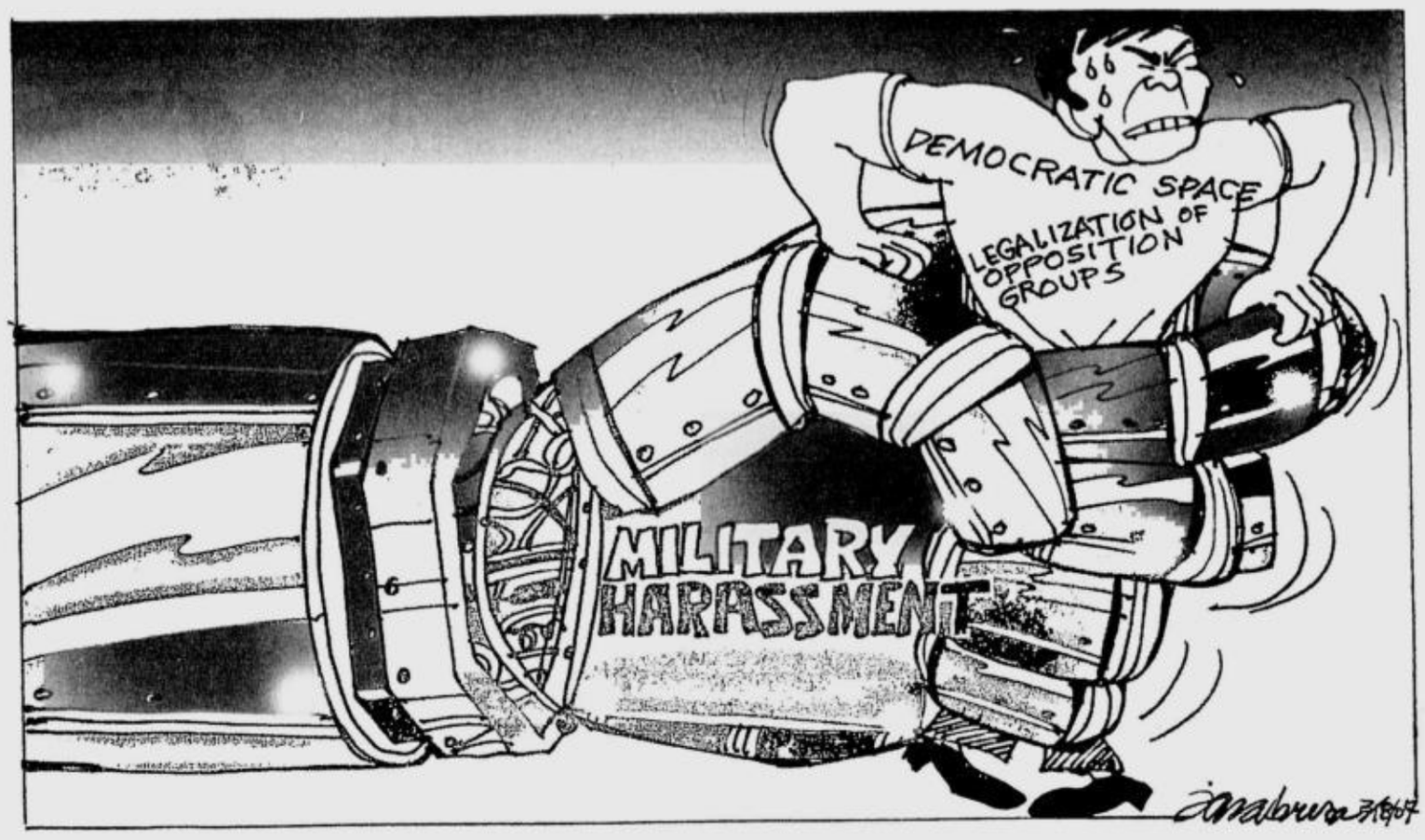


Cleansing the Senate

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

THE JONES LAW OF 1916 REPLACED THE unicameral Philippine Assembly with a bicameral Philippine Legislature consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives. The innovative Senate was to be elected from bigger districts composed of several smaller districts from which the members of the House of Representatives were to be chosen. The senator was supposed to be the political kingpin of the senatorial district and the acknowledged superior of the representatives from its component districts.

In 1941, the bicameral Congress of the Philippines was created in place of the unicameral National Assembly, but with one important modification. Instead of being elected from the old senatorial districts as under the Jones Law, the members of the new Senate would henceforth be chosen nation-wide like the President and Vice President of the Philippines. The announced reason was that the upper chamber would be the breeding ground of future presidents of the country with their adequate grasp of national as distinguished from purely parochial problems.

That hope seemed to be fulfilled during the early years of the Senate with such of its distinguished members like Manuel A. Roxas, Claro M. Recto, Jose P. Laurel, Quintin Paredes and, later, Lorenzo M. Tañada, Jose W. Diokno, Jovito R. Salonga and other outstanding legislators. That hope withered, however, when the once highly respected chamber began to be invaded and emaciated with unlikely intruders supported by the *bakya* crowd deliriously beguiled by toilet jokes and other vulgarities.

To date, the Senate while still counting with a few redeeming members has been befouled with a shameful lack of intelligence and decorum. One member has reportedly said that he has not passed a single bill because he has not even passed high school; another starred in a grade B action movie while sitting in the highest legislative chamber in the country; and a third protested to the United Nations that the credentials of our former chief justice as our newly-appointed ambassador to that world organization are invalid. And now several more of their kind are hoping to join them to further pollute the chamber where once trod mighty statesmen of our race.

The current candidates in the coming senatorial elections are mostly second-rate, with only a measly few deserving popular acclaim for their intelligence and integrity. I personally would include among the exceptions Joker Arroyo from the administration and Loren Legarda from the opposition, and Sonia Roco too, who embodies the high principles of her departed husband. I will also vote for Martin Bautista, Zosimo Paredes and Adrian Sison from Nandy Pacheco's Kapatiran although they don't have much of a chance against those candidates with more political and financial resources.

I will vote for several other meritorious aspirants although they are bound to lose but not in disgrace. In my book, these underdogs have already won the elections because they have demonstrated the courage to face defeat at the hands of rivals less concerned with the nation's welfare and future.

Considering the bleak future of the Senate with its further deterioration by the invasion of more unworthy members who will degrade it, I hope that when the temporarily-postponed move for the revision of the 1987 Constitution is resumed, the delegates will re-examine the supposed wisdom of the election of senators at large. The original optimism that it will prepare the members of the Senate to competently occupy Malacañang is no longer valid, as witness our sad experience with Joseph Estrada. The record of some pretenders catapulted to the Senate by the deluded electorate is depressing and chastening but there they are again hoping to be rewarded for their presumptuousness and notoriety. They should be running not for but away from public office.

Others with more campaign funds than intellectual qualifications have better prospects of winning and tarnishing the already blemished name of the Senate. They're like rotten apples spoiling the other healthy fruits in the same barrel.

I believe that going back to the senatorial districts will be more practical than requiring the senatorial candidates to campaign through the length and breadth of the Philippine archipelago; meeting strangers they have never seen before and will never recognize again; spending much time, effort and money while traveling by land, sea and air to listen to minor problems better solved by local officials and not by national leaders like them; and probably winning by cheated margins in obscure precincts where rivals have no hope of guarding against or correcting poll irregularities and filing protests that will require them to spend millions of pesos just to pay for the cost of bringing the ballot boxes to the Senate Electoral Tribunal in Manila for inspection and verification.

No wonder there are serious suggestions for the abolition of the Senate once graced by Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmeña during its honored past. And leave the new Parliament composed of the present members of the House of Representatives to commit further depredations on the Constitution? That would be like leaping from the frying pan into the fire.

Incidental

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THERE IS A STORY ABOUT THREE MEN WHO were drunk. They were out to catch the last train, but it was already pulling out of the station. The three ran and tried to catch up with the train. The train conductor pulled in the first, and then the second. But he failed when he tried to pull in the third. So, the third man was left behind. The station master commiserated with the man who was left behind. But the man said, "Well, I'm sorry for those guys. You see, they were here just to see me off!"

* * *

In today's Gospel (Lk. 15, 1-3; 11-32), we hear the beautiful story of the prodigal son and the forgiving father. It's a beautiful story that has been told again and again. But perhaps we can focus on an insignificant—perhaps, even trivial—character in the story: the fattened calf which was slaughtered when the prodigal son came back. What was its fault? Why was it killed? Why was it sacrificed? The fattened calf was just an "incidental" that suffered and died. Think today of the many "incidentals" who suffered because of you and your misdeeds in life.

* * *

Conversion is not just about going back to the Father in contrition. It is also the humble acceptance that we affect and hurt people because of our sins. Lent is not just about contrition; it is also about reparation for our sins against our sisters and brothers whom we have wronged. Let us not forget the horizontal, the social aspect of our sins.

* * *

As you go about pursuing your targets and your dreams, make sure you are not reckless and irresponsible in your driving. As you climb up the ladder of success, make sure that you are not stepping upon people. Please remember that other people have dreams, too. Be kind to people. Don't use people. Be kind to their hopes and dreams.

* * *

Remember the "Driver's Prayer": "Grant me, Oh Lord, a steady mind, a watchful eye, so that no one will be hurt as I pass by." How many people have you hurt as you passed by? How many innocent lives have been affected because of your personal ambition and agenda? How many fattened calves have been slaughtered because of you?

* * *

The primary message of the parable of the prodigal son is that we must repent and go back to the Father who awaits us. But an equally important message is that we must repent and stop hurting people. Something is basically wrong when a person becomes repentant and religious *kuno* but goes right on using and oppressing others. Something is basically wrong when someone claims to be prayerful, and even invokes God's name in his/her decisions, but goes on cheating, lying and manipulating people anyway. As long as you think that people are just incidentals or non-essentials, then something is missing, something is wrong. Wake up from your illusion that you are the center of this world, and that it's all right if people have to suffer because of you. It's not all right. People are not incidentals. People are not a commodity.

* * *

Beware of "the politics of incidentals" wherein people are used, votes are bought and a person's choice is not respected and altogether desecrated. Beware of users pretending to be leaders.

* * *

There's no place like home, so go home. Don't stay away from the Father too far, too long. The Father awaits you. In the end, there's no embrace like the Father's unconditional embrace. As the song says: "When you're tired of being reckless and carefree, remember that I'll be waiting to welcome you home." *Uwi na sa puso ng Dios Ama.* Now *na.* (Go home to the Father's heart, now.)

* * *

Just a thought: What if the father was no longer around when the prodigal son came back? What if the father in the story died in the meantime? How would the older brother have treated his prodigal brother? Would there have been a welcome, or would there have been refusal and retribution? The story of the loving father is not just about his love for his lost son; it is also about his challenge for his children to love, forgive and welcome their prodigal brothers and sisters. *Forgive na. Now na.*

* * *

Whenever you read or hear the story of the prodigal son, which character do you identify yourself with? The loving father? The prodigal son? The resentful older brother? Aside from these three main characters, there are also the incidentals, like the friends of the prodigal son, the swine owner who hired him, the swine that he tended, the intriguing servants, and, yes, the fattened calf. Perhaps, the lesson of the story is that there are really no incidentals. In God's eyes, each one of us has a role to play in this life, and each one of us has a place in the Father's heart. To begin to see things, people, events and moments His way, not our way, is the deeper call and meaning of conversion. Conversion is putting on the glasses of God, going beyond our little screens and seeing the Big Picture.

* * *

Always remember that God only makes happy endings, if it's not happy, then it's not yet the end. If you're in struggle, take courage for it's not done yet. Trust and wait, strengthen your faith and pray. Get daily suggestions of prayer, text ON PRAYER to 2948 for Globe/Sun or 3940 for Smart. God bless you, Mama Mary loves you!

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, remind me that there are no incidentals in your eyes. Amen.

Why the CBCP does not choose candidates

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban

PRIOR TO 1965, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S involvement in politics was largely unheard of. Since then, however, Church militancy in political affairs has increasingly become visible and audible. Why?

Second Vatican Council. The answer can be traced to the transformation of the Church, which was started by the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) that met in 1962 to 1965. Among many other reforms, Vatican II underscored the need for the Christians' total or integral development. This meant that believers must act out their faith in all facets of their being.

Integral development requires the faithful to use Gospel values wherever they are and in whatever they do. They should be Christians not only while praying in the churches or serving in charitable causes, but also in undertaking mundane activities like studying in school, working in offices or enjoying their leisure.

Christianity does not merely save souls for the next life; it also liberates humans from the oppressions of the present life to enable them to develop multi-dimensionally, that is, spiritually, economically, socially, culturally and politically. Thus, aside from teaching the sacraments, the Church is also pro-life, pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-human rights and pro-principle.

Specifically, "Christifideles Laici," one of the 16 documents issued by Vatican II, asked the lay faithful "never to relinquish participation in public life." Politics should not be shunned. Qualified Christians should be encouraged "to restore all things in Christ" in their public life.

Significantly, Vatican II emphasized the importance of the laity. Whereas in the past, lay involvement in the Church was regarded merely as assistance in the apostolate of the hierarchy, "Lumen Gentium" (another Vatican II issuance) proclaimed the "empowerment of the faithful" and their equality "in dignity and in mission" to the clergy. They are not mere deputies or helpers of priests; they are co-workers and collaborators in serving God.

Second Plenary Council of the Philippines. Echoing the teachings of Vatican II, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) was convened in Makati on Jan. 20 to Feb. 17, 1991. For the first time in the history of the Church, selected lay leaders were invited to participate in its "lawmaking" body. Involvement of Christians in public life was expressly delineated in PCP II Resolution 28, which I quote as follows:

"1. Lay men and women in responsible positions in our society must help form the civic conscience of the voting population and work to explicitly promote the election to public office of leaders of true integrity.

"2. Bishops, priests and religious, commonly identified as 'the Church,' must refrain from partisan politics, avoiding especially the use of the pulpit for partisan purposes to avoid division among the flock they shepherd."

Note that the first paragraph encourages lay people "to explicitly promote the election to public office of leaders of true integrity." On the other hand, the second paragraph urges the hierarchy to "refrain from partisan politics . . . to avoid division among the flock," considering that most of the candidates are Catholics. As a lay participant in PCP II, I remember quite vividly the emphasis given during our deliberations to these distinct roles of the laity and the clergy.

As far as I know, the Holy See does not encourage direct clergy intervention in State or partisan affairs (like endorsing candidates), considering that the Universal Church is active in evangelical work not only in the Philippines but in many other countries, like China and Vietnam. Indeed, the evangelization mission of the Church would be hindered if the civil authorities in these countries became suspicious of its pastoral activities.

Prudence in partisan activities. Given this background, it is no wonder that Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), rejected the proposal of Bro. Mike Velarde "to choose candidates" for the May 14 senatorial elections. He explained that to "dictate on (the faithful) whom to vote for is as bad as buying their votes," remembering that the CBCP has condemned the politics of "guns, goons and gold," emphasis here on gold.

Note further that there is no national Catholic authority that can command such a choice or dictation. Each archdiocese/diocese in the country is autonomous and each archbishop/bishop is supreme within his jurisdiction, and is responsible directly to Rome, not to any local supreme religious head; not even to the CBCP.

Consistent with these pronouncements, bishops have generally been prudent in their election-related involvements, limiting themselves mostly to the issuance of "guidelines" for voters. Nonetheless, the hierarchy—pursuant to Resolution 28—has been actively supporting the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), because it is nonpartisan and adheres closely to the pronouncements of the CBCP.

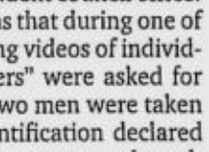
In a call for visionary leaders by example, which was similar to my own call, the PPCRV has asked for the election of candidates who embody "principles, programs and performance" and the rejection of those who use "payoff, personality (or popularity) and patronage."

To some critics, this may be an indirect and extremely cautious way of getting good people to public office. But the direct and confrontational method may be short-sighted and harmful to both the Church and the State in the long term.

* * *

Comments are welcome at chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com

Games of generals



REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista

NUMBER 591 TERESA SITS ON A NARROW COBBLED road lined with storefronts offering ID laminations, photocopying services and cheeseburgers available 24 hours a day. Down Teresa Road, over railway tracks that cut across the street, is the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

Number 591, almost right where the road begins, is the barangay hall, a one-room wide, two-story building, unimposing in its smallness. The grills of its second-floor balcony are hung with the same tarps used to promote government officials. This time, they are hung backwards, clean white sides facing out. They are not there to advertise, but to hide the row of army fatigues and camouflage bags that are hung on the rails.

A lanky soldier in his 50s sits, filling out a form, and I ask who I can interview. He tells me to speak to 2nd Lieutenant Lim, and mumbles about IDs and permits, and finally goes up to call the lieutenant. Lim comes down the stairs, past a pair of soldiers playing poker on the landing. He slouches on the seat, legs spread in light blue shorts, and speaks out of the corner of his mouth. He makes side comments I cannot hear, and maybe it's better that I don't, because I'm a girl with a temper, who is alone in a military detachment. I ask for his full name, and he bristles: "You don't know my first name?"

I ask if he's aware people are unhappy about the military's presence in the barangay, and he says there are no complaints. Talk to the community, he says, talk to the community.

The community Lim is talking about has much to say. Soldiers, the residents tell me, have been going door to door, offering rice and haircuts, and their opinions on the evils of activist party-list organizations. The students are also under threat. Last December, PUP 's chief of security caught military men sneaking down the school fence, right across a military detachment and surrounding the student council office. Student council chair Sophia Prado claims that during one of their student forums, two men were taking videos of individual student speakers. The "photographers" were asked for IDs, and they refused to show any. The two men were taken to the school's security office; their identification declared the two as active military personnel. The men, caught red-handed, claimed they were in campus to meet with the ROTC. Asked why they were at the forum, far from the ROTC office, taking videos, they said it was because of "curiosity."

In a March 13 letter, Col. Ricardo Visaya, head of the Civil Military Operations Battalion of the Philippine Army, assured Rolando Almonguerra, father of Kabataan Party's second nominee Enrico Almonguerra, that his department was one with all parents in hoping that someday, their children "would achieve all their ambitions, stand on their own feet, and become good citizens to help our motherland from hardship."

"I am writing," said Colonel Visaya, "about the situation of our children, with regards to their studies and their joining organizations that participate in leftist activities that are not right and could possibly ruin their education. This is an alarming state of affairs especially to their future, and we would like to give both attention and solution to avoid their fall into these dealings, to correct this problem immediately for the good of their education and the good of their future."

The letter "invites" Mr. Almonguerra and his son to the Office of Civil Military Operations Battalion of the Philippine Army in Fort Bonifacio at 9 a.m. on March 22, so he can "better explain our goal of helping protect the future of our children."

Such benevolence from the colonel. Unfortunately, he is unaware that Enrico Almonguerra already graduated in spite of his foray into "leftist activities." It appears his future is of little concern to the colonel. This same letter has been sent to three other youth leaders, and smacks of the same arrogance that has led the military to arbitrarily send its personnel to 26 of the poorest barangays in Metro Manila.

In a forum among residents in Parola, Tondo, a rebel returnee, a woman with a military haircut and hoop earrings, rages about the terrible consequences of the youth joining party-list groups. These groups, she tells the resigned-looking parents in the audience, will inevitably cause their sons and daughters to take up arms against the government. A smiling Colonel Visaya sits behind a long table, and nods at her wisdom. Soldiers sit on benches in the graffitied basketball court. On that day, over 20 long firearms were in the vicinity.

The next speaker—a man whose words ring with the livid conviction of a fanatical preacher—damned all leftist groups, all of which, he claims, are fronts for the New People's Army. He names them: Bayan Muna, Gabriela, KMU, KMP. All of them, he thunders, are in league with armed rebels. All who support these groups are in danger of damning themselves.

Colonel Visaya takes the mike, at last. "We are not here to campaign for any candidate or group. We are not here to campaign against any group."

The difference between a leftist and an armed rebel is as different as that of, say, a Palestinian and an al-Qaida bomber, but it is a difference that the military systematically ignores. Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, the commanding general of the NCR, claims that the role of the 26 military teams composed of 260 field personnel is to patrol and engage in anti-leftist information campaign. "We are not targeting certain people," says Dolorfino. "We are targeting problems."

He claims that all this is simply an awareness campaign on being responsible citizens. They are not electioneering; they do not carry long guns; they do not wear camouflage uniforms—they are simply there to provide community service.

In Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City, a soldier wearing an officer's attire, informs me happily that the soldiers are dressed formally because they have visitors. As to what they wear when making their rounds: "Of course, we wear camouflage, and the gun is as much part of the uniform." According to residents, soldiers march around at all hours in threes, fours and fives, carrying M16s and wander even into the narrowest alleys.

In an overpass next to Barangay Commonwealth, the vendors explain why the military is there. They have asked the soldiers why, and the reason is the simplest and most logical among all the thousand contradictory and complicated statements issued by the military.

"*Para sa eleksyon*."

* * *

For comments, just text: PM REBEL name, age, location, message then send to 2948 for Globe/Sun and 3940 for Smart. E-mail at rebel.inquirer@gmail.com

Cruising the Chao Phraya River

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BANGKOK—DESPITE HAVING VISITED THAILAND four or five times previously, I had seen very little of the country outside the capital. Some years back, I was able to visit Chiang Mai in the north, but much of what I remember of that visit is centered on the marketplace and the fantastic bargains to be had!

This time around, I resolved to see more of the Thai countryside and, having convinced my husband to take a break and join me, I set about looking for a countryside tour we could both take when the workshop was over.

Little did I know that, by surfing Google, I would end up with one of the most unforgettable and enjoyable experiences I would ever have! Searching for "tours of Bangkok," I came across an item on "tour reviews" and this was where I found out about the cruises on board the Mekhala.

According to the anonymous review, titled "Love Boat: Cruising with the Moon Goddess at 10 km per Hour," Mekhala, the Moon Goddess and also the Goddess of the Waters in Khmer mythology, has lent her name to two converted rice barges that cruise along the Chao Phraya River. A downriver tour aboard the Mekhala begins with visits to the ruins of Ayuthaya, the ancient Thai royal capital (about an hour's drive from Bangkok); as well as to the Bang Pa-In Palace, the summer quarters for the Thai Royal Family; and to popular temples. After buffet lunch at a riverside hotel and a short ride on a longtail boat around Ayuthaya Island, we finally boarded the Mekhala, after a brief but thrilling ride on a "swing ferry" that brought us to the opposite riverbank.

* * *

"WELCOME to your boat!" the ship master, Adi, bade us as we clambered up gleaming teak steps. After taking off our shoes as Adi requested, we had a chance to look around "our" boat—an open wooden deck with comfortable chairs and club tables, and a lounge replete with cushioned benches and those triangular pillows so ideal for napping and lazing about.

Down a few steps, we found ourselves in a narrow corridor flanked by doors, and when we opened the door to our cabin, we found a marvel of efficiency and space planning. There was a narrow cushioned bench for our bags, a raised double bed, and even a small desk. There was an air-conditioner, but we were told it would start working only after we had docked for the night. A few steps led down to the tiny bathroom, another testament to efficient planning.

And who cared about air-conditioning when on deck, the river breezes blew lustily, and the pillows were so inviting to slumber? I was shaken awake only by the arrival of our shipboard companions, a group of five women and a man, all of them French, and all of them chirping with happiness—as we had been on arrival—at the boat's charms and its gentle, smiling crew of four.

* * *

WE were finally underway. The boat was traveling at a slow-paced 10 km per hour, but we didn't feel it, as the breezes blew into our faces and the scenery sped by: river houses with small porches jutting out on to the water; *wats* or temples with their distinctive gold-tipped roofs and winged finials that made each appear like the entire structure was taking wing; and friendly natives waving from speed boats or windows.

Near dusk, the Mekhala docked beside a temple, known as the Wat Kai Tia, where the crew promptly attached a power line for electricity and a hose for the water supply. Loudspeakers blaring Thai pop music greeted us, as did a welcome committee of three dogs, and for a while I was worried that a 24-hour karaoke session would be our companion for the night. But when we got off the boat to take a look around, we found out the music was meant to tell the "faithful" that there would be services in the temple that night. The scene we found around Wat Kai Tia was typically rural—quiet rice fields, a schoolyard where a game of football was taking place, and two boys riding their bicycles.

Then it was time to get on board again, with the open-air deck transformed into an elegant restaurant, with candle-lit service for dinner. By this time, too, the other Mekhala had docked beside us, and it turned out our French shipmates knew the passengers in the other boat, exchanging toasts and greetings across the narrow gap.

With Adi serving as head waiter, our dinner began with appetizers of spring rolls, followed by small platters of stir-fried vegetables in oyster sauce, pork with ginger and mushrooms, and beef curry. This was topped off with dessert of fresh fruits with a sweet coulis of toasted coconut. The stars winked overhead, and when I complained that we didn't have a full moon, the hubby remarked: "That would be too much!"

* * *

IT had been a long day, and the river breeze made us drowsy. Retiring to our space-efficient room, there was even time for a warm shower before climbing on to our comfortable beds.

The sky was still dark when we woke up to the sound of engines revving. My husband had gotten up earlier and was already scanning the horizon when I followed him up on deck. Stirred by the breezes, we watched the sky turn from indigo to light blue then to nearly white as the sun rose. Adi then called us and the French group to a breakfast of corn flakes, fresh fruit and toast—though, for fellow Asians, Adi offered a rice porridge that, we suspect, had been prepared for the crew.

As the Mekhala made its way downriver, the landscape on the riverbanks gradually transformed from rural to urban, and the small wooden boats gave way to commercial transport and commuter boats, the tiny houses to buildings and gleaming hotels. We were sorry to see the journey end, but resolved to share the experience with anyone who wanted to know what else there is to do in Bangkok apart from shopping.

The world is watching

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

THE ATTACKS ON THE NATION'S IMAGE HAVE come one after the other. The first came from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) which certifies the eligibility of graduates of foreign nursing schools for work in the United States. The commission had made it known they would deny VisaScreen certification to passers who would fail to retake and pass the leaked portions of the June 2006 nursing licensure examination.

The second came in the form of the almost simultaneous visits of the United Nations Human Rights Commission's special rapporteur on human rights, Philip Alston, and the European Commission's director general for external relations, Eneko Landaburu. Both expressed the deep concern of their respective organizations over the unsolved murders of hundreds of Filipino activists and journalists in the last five years.

The third came with the hearing being conducted by the US Senate foreign relations subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs on the implications of these killings. The chair of this subcommittee, California Sen. Barbara Boxer, has upbraided the Arroyo administration for failing to take "sufficient action to address unsolved killings and bring those responsible to justice."

The fourth is the release by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) of their findings on perceptions of corruption in the Asian region. In the latest PERC report, which synthesized the responses of almost 1,500 expatriate business executives, the Philippines was adjudged the "most corrupt" in a list of 13 countries in Asia.

These unsolicited warnings are telling the Philippine government to shape up if it is to continue enjoying the respect and support of the outside world. How have we responded?

A Philippine delegation, led by Rep. Monico Puentevella and Chair Leonor Rosero of the Professional Regulation Commission, went to the United States to appeal the CGFNS' decision. They were, of course, rebuffed. "The key question was not what Philippine authorities did, but what US authorities would have done in similar circumstances," said the CGFNS.

On the visit of the UN human rights envoy, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said that foreigners should not come and lecture us on human rights if they have no experience in fighting insurgencies in their own countries. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, for his part, rudely dismissed the importance of Alston's visit, calling the man a mere messenger of the UN. Armed Forces officials accused the UN representative of being biased in favor of the leftist groups. More recently, Secretary Gonzalez called the US Senate hearing an affront to Philippine sovereignty.

Malacañang did not quite know how to react to the PERC corruption report. Ms Arroyo was in a state of denial. She said in an interview: "Our credit ratings are fine. The political analysis, they (PERC) work on old data. They don't work on up-to-date data." This line was uncritically echoed by one of her most loyal defenders, former Cabinet member Michael Defensor. Corruption was an "inherited" problem, he said, adding that the PERC perceptions were based on the unfinished plunder case against former president Joseph Estrada. Another official lamely said the survey measured perceptions of corruption, not corruption itself.

These interventions are reminders that nations are no longer the self-enclosed systems they imagine themselves to be. The more they deal with the outside world, the more they will be measured by the standards of modern societies. Our government, the most globalized in this part of the world, should know that more than anyone else. We cannot expect other countries to blindly receive the workers we send out to the world without minimum guarantees of the qualifications they are supposed to have. Neither can we expect foreign investors to come and invest in our country if, in their opinion, doing business here means having to pay off corrupt officials at every turn.

More important, no government today can preside over the senseless murder of its own citizens and hope to escape accountability before the world community. Especially if such a government professes to be a democracy. Indeed, less and less are governments able to invoke national sovereignty to defend themselves against international criticism. Every society today, with the exception of a few hermit nations, finds itself participating in a modern global discourse on justice and fairness that allows little room for excuses based on claims to uniqueness.

It is not to say that powerful nations like the United States will not try to shape this discourse, or to use it to browbeat smaller countries. But, even as they do, the usefulness of the modern values being promoted is undiminished. In many societies where citizens are at the mercy of callous dictatorships, the modern global community that actively defends these values often functions as the only shield against barbarity. Even the Burmese military junta knows it has to recognize limits to its brutality if it is to avoid total isolation.

It is significant that Bayan Muna Party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, who has been arrested on murder charges which bear all the marks of judicial arbitrariness, has recorded his appeal for justice on a cell phone and uploaded the short video clip on YouTube. The use of this medium and this popular Internet site underscores the global character of what is at stake here. The world is watching us, warning us, and the Arroyo regime is running out of excuses.

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

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TALK of the TOWN

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Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

10 medicinal plants on DOH list

FOUR of the medicinal plants—sambong, lagundi, tsaang gubat and yerba buena—are available in tablet form.

HEALTH SECRETARY FRANCISCO DUQUE III ISSUED A CIRCULAR ON JAN. 29 putting back *ampalaya* (*Momordica charantia*) on the Department of Health's list of "scientifically validated herbal medicinal plants."

He based his decision on "recent evidence on the clinical efficacy of ampalaya against diabetes mellitus."

Clinical trials conducted by scientists at the University of the Philippines in Manila and Los Baños have found that leaves of ampalaya growing in Mt. Makiling are comparable to synthetic drugs for diabetes. Other studies have established that ampalaya fruits and seeds have medicinal properties.

Duque's directive recalls a circular issued in 2003 reclassifying ampalaya from scientifically validated medicinal plant to folklorically validated medicinal plant.

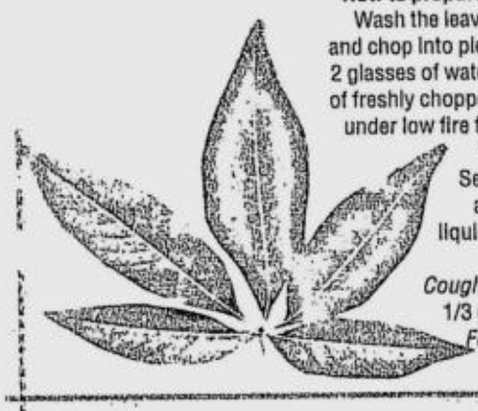
Sales of ampalaya-based food supplements plummeted after the downgrade. With the new DOH circular, five companies have expressed interest in manufacturing tablets from the leaves of ampalaya's Makiling variety.

Once sold to the public, however, the ampalaya tablets should be taken only upon doctor's prescription.

The government is promoting the 10 medicinal plants partly because of the "high cost of synthetic medicines," said Cirilo Galindez, acting director of the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC), an attached agency of the DOH. A tablet of *lagundi* costs only P2.

Like any drug, the 10 medicinal plants on the DOH list can be dangerous if used the wrong way or if taken in doses more than the recommended amount.

The information on the medicinal plants used here came from the PITAHC.

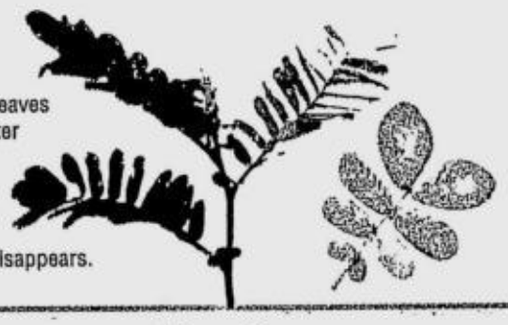


How to prepare a decoction: Wash the leaves thoroughly and chop into pieces. Measure 2 glasses of water, and 1 glass of freshly chopped leaves. Boil under low fire for 15 minutes without cover. Set aside to cool and strain. The liquid is now ready for drinking. *Cough and asthma* - 1/3 glass 3x a day; *Fever* - 1/3 glass every 4 hours

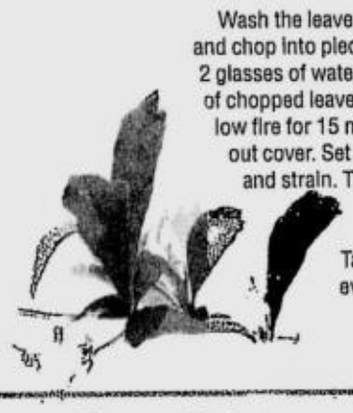
Lagundi
(Five-leafed chaste tree)

Vitex negundo

Cough, asthma and fever



- Pound fresh, mature leaves and apply extracted juice on affected areas 1 to 2x a day. For people who are allergic to extracted juice, a decoction can be prepared by boiling 1 glass of chopped leaves into 2 glasses of water for 15 minutes. Use decoction to wash affected areas 1 to 2x a day until skin disorder disappears. Available in lotion.

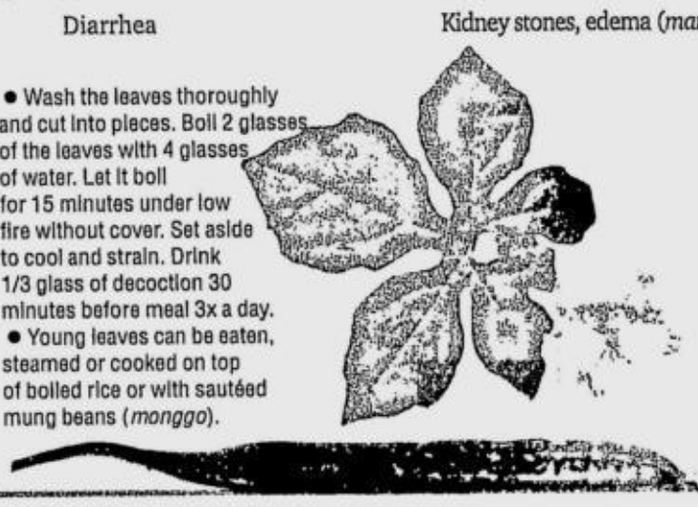


Wash the leaves thoroughly and chop into pieces. Measure 2 glasses of water and 1 glass of chopped leaves. Boil under low fire for 15 minutes without cover. Set aside to cool and strain. The decoction can now be drank. Take 1/2 glass every 4 hours.

Tsaang Gubat
(Wild tea)

Carmona retusa

Diarrhea



- Wash the leaves thoroughly and cut into pieces. Boil 2 glasses of the leaves with 4 glasses of water. Let it boil for 15 minutes under low fire without cover. Set aside to cool and strain. Drink 1/3 glass of decoction 30 minutes before meal 3x a day.
- Young leaves can be eaten, steamed or cooked on top of boiled rice or with sautéed mung beans (*monggo*).

Wash the leaves and cut into pieces. Measure 2 glasses of water and 1 glass of chopped leaves. Boil in low fire for 15 minutes without cover. Set aside, cool and strain. Drink 1/3 glass 3x a day. Not intended for kidney or bladder infection.

Sambong
(Blumea camphor)

Blumea balsamifera

Kidney stones, edema (*manas*) and hypertension

- Fry in a small amount or without oil. Broil the cloves. Soak in vinegar for 30 minutes. Blanch in boiling water for 5 minutes. Eat two to three cloves after every meal.

- Wash the leaves thoroughly and chop into pieces. Measure 2 glasses of water and 1 glass of chopped leaves. Boil under low fire for 15 minutes without cover. Set aside to cool, and strain.
- Pounded fresh leaves can be applied directly on the painful area. Drink 1/3 glass 3x a day.

Yerba Buena
(Mint)

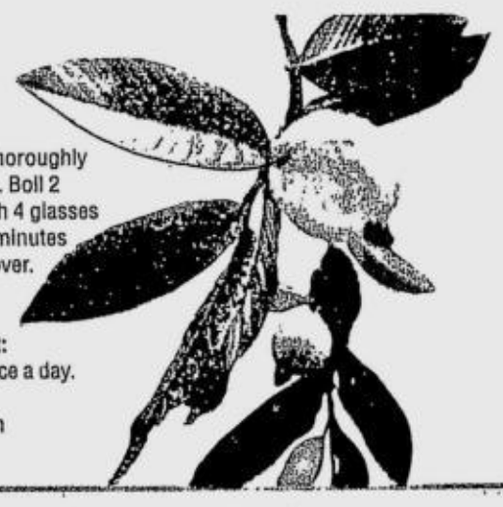
Mentha cordifolia Opiz

Body pain

Akapulko
(Ringworm bush)

Cassia alata

Fungus e.g. ringworm (*buni*), tinea flava (*an-an*) and scabies (*galis aso*)



- Wash the leaves thoroughly and chop into pieces. Boil 2 glasses of leaves with 4 glasses of water. Boil for 15 minutes in low fire without cover. Set aside to cool then strain.
- **Wound treatment:** Wash the wound twice a day.
- **Mouthwash:** Lukewarm decoction

Ampalaya
(Bitter gourd)

Momordica charantia

Diabetes mellitus

- Use only mature seeds, dried and newly cracked nut. Adult, 8-10 seeds
  7-12 years old, 6-7 seeds
  6-8 years old, 5-6 seeds
  4-5 years old, 4-5 seeds.
- Consume seeds 2 hours after a meal. If the first dose has no effect, repeat the same dose after one week.

Bawang
(Garlic)

Allium sativum

High cholesterol level

- **Salad:** Wash 1 1/2 glasses of fresh mature leaves thoroughly. Add a pinch of salt and pepper.
- **Decoction:** Wash the leaves thoroughly and chop into pieces. Boil 2 glasses of chopped leaves with 4 glasses of water for 15 minutes in low fire without cover. Cool and strain. Drink 1/3 glass after every meal, or 3x a day.

Bayabas
(Guava)

Psidium guajava

Mouth and skin infections

Niyug-Niyogan
(Burma creeper, Chinese honeysuckle)

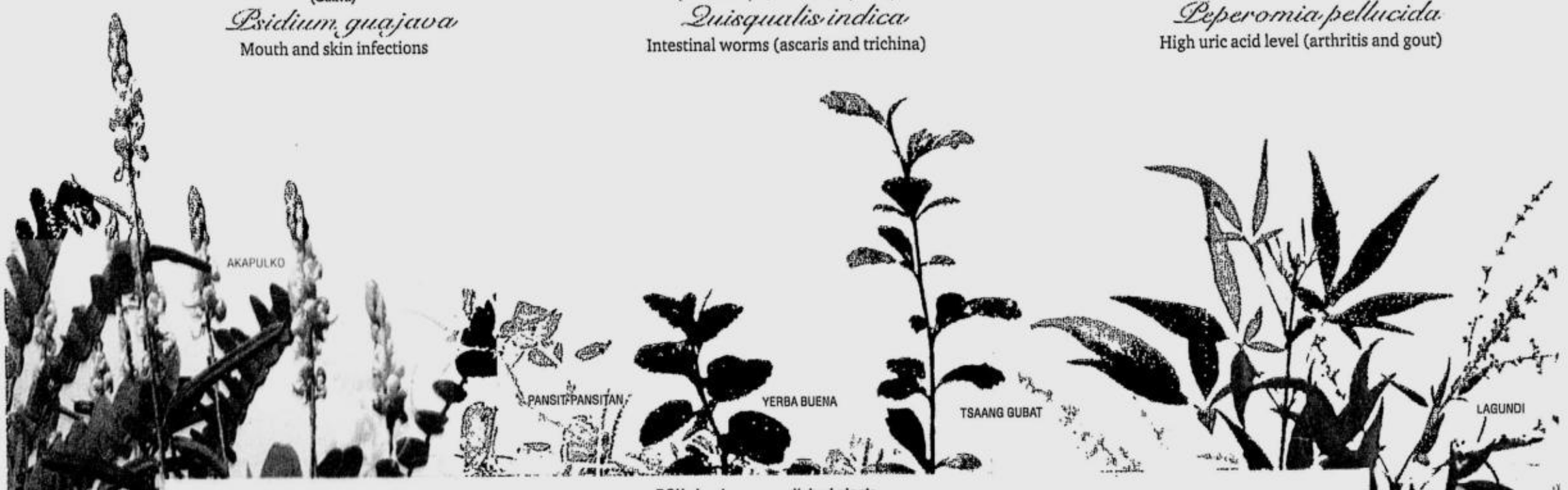
Quisqualis indica

Intestinal worms (ascaris and trichina)

Ulasimang Bato or Pansit-Pansitan
(Peperomia)

Peperomia pellucida

High uric acid level (arthritis and gout)



DOH circulars on medicinal plants

- 1992. Then Health Secretary Juan Flavier issues Administrative Order No. 12 setting up the Traditional Medicine Program to promote traditional medicine in the country.
- Dec. 9, 1997. Then President Fidel Ramos signs into law Republic Act No. 8423, or the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act, creating the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care, a government-owned and-controlled corporation attached to the Department of Health.
- Oct. 27, 1995. Then Health Secretary Hilarion Ramiro issues Circular 168-A listing 10 "scientifically validated herbal medicinal plants"—*lagundi, tsaang gubat, sambong, yerba buena, akapulko, ampalaya, bawang, bayabas, niyug-niyogan* and *ulasimang bato.*
- June 23, 2003. Then Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit issues Circular 196-A reclassifying ampalaya from scientifically validated herbal medicinal plant to folklorically validated herbal medicinal plant "in light of lack of evidence on the clinical efficacy of ampalaya against diabetes mellitus."
- Jan. 29, 2007. Health Secretary Francisco Duque III issues Circular 2007-0058 reinstating ampalaya as a scientifically validated herbal medicinal plant "in light of recent evidence on the clinical efficacy of ampalaya against diabetes mellitus."

IMAGE SOURCES: DIETMAR J RUMMEL, PHILIPPINE MEDICINAL PLANTS IN PRIMARY CARE / WWW.STUARTXCHANGE.ORG

PAGEDESIGN: L. A. VILLARIBA · ARTWORK: ERNIE SAMBO

Lone survivor longs for leader like Magsaysay

From page A1

The Philippines Herald's Malacañang reporter, then 31, was knocked unconscious. When he came to more than an hour later, he was lying on the side of a cliff and saw the plane wreckage down a ravine engulfed in flames.

"I was clinging to a sapling. And I was calling out, 'Mr. President, Mr. President, Mr. President,' and nobody answered. That was when I realized I was surrounded by death," he says in an interview, recounting the ghastly scene.

President Ramon Magsaysay and 25 others on the same flight were killed instantly when the presidential plane crashed into Mt. Manunggal, Cebu, shortly after it took off from the then Lahug airport an hour past midnight.

Mata, who was thrown from the C-47 plane and sustained burns on his arms and legs, was the lone survivor.

The family and friends of Magsaysay marked his 50th death anniversary yesterday.

Popular democracy

Now 81, Mata says his best memories of Magsaysay were his trips to the countryside, where he mingled, chatted at length and, yes, broke bread with the poor.

This style of leadership defined the Magsaysay presidency, and nobody before and after him approximated it, the veteran journalist reckons.

"He must have been the first Filipino leader to practice popular democracy. It's bringing the government to the people. And that has never been done after him. And that made him different from his predecessors," Mata says.

He shares one unforgettable anecdote: While traveling in the countryside, Magsaysay ordered the presidential convoy to stop. He got off the car and without his security men, walked up to a group of farmers huddled by the road and asked for a drink.

"They gave him a can of water, and he drank it," Mata says. "He loved the people, and the people loved him. Everywhere he went, he touched them and they touched him."

Magsaysay always had the "public interest in mind" and would consult them first whenever Cabinet officials or businessmen turned up in his office to get his approval for a project proposal, according to Mata.

"He didn't take the recommendations of the experts at face value. He went to the people. That's why he is best remembered for that question: 'Can we defend this at Plaza Miranda?' What he meant was that you have to consult the people," he says.

Mata has recounted this story about the "great tragedy" hundreds of times, in the series of news articles he wrote for the Herald in the aftermath of the crash, and in the columns he has churned out year after year for different papers. And he's still at it, and in fact, is devoting a chapter of his memoirs to it.

Mata was the reporter who covered Magsaysay and tailed him everywhere from his election on Dec. 30, 1953, to his death three years later.

Integrity

Magsaysay had other accomplishments throughout his short-lived term—agrarian reform, artesian wells that brought fresh water to the rural folk, an anticorruption campaign, among others—but in the eyes of Mata, he is best remembered for his "popular democracy."

And of course, for his unsullied integrity.

"Yes," he says when asked if he is longing for a leader in the mold and character of the late President. "Maybe we're now dealing with a new generation. Somebody must come out of the world of politics who can approximate the stature of Magsaysay. One who loves the people; one who is loved by the people."

On the day of the crash, Magsaysay had 12 appointments in Cebu City. While about to call it a day, an official suggested that he visit a soldiers' village near the airport, and so he did after nightfall before flying back to Manila.

"He was in high spirits. He was a go-go kind of leader. That's why they called him the man of action," Mata says, recalling the hectic day with the President.

It was an hour past midnight when the presidential plane "Mt. Pinatubo" finally took off from the Lahug airport. In all his trips to the Visayas and Mindanao, Magsaysay never stayed overnight in a place, but always flew back to Manila to be with First Lady Luz Banzon-Magsaysay.

While about to board the plane, Mata heard the President mutter "Let's go!" The reporter hopped in, and sat three seats away from the President's cabin.

"In the plane, I still saw him talking animatedly to Sen. Tomas Cabili, Education Secretary Gregorio Hernandez and Congressman Pedro Lopez," he recalls.

Mata, who was found by a dog and was carried down the mountain in a hammock by a group of farmers five hours after the crash, still managed to dispatch a story to the Herald by dictating it to a nurse from his bed at the Southern Philippines Hospital in Cebu.

"I began that dispatch with 'President Magsaysay is dead,'" he recalls. From his bed at the Veterans Memorial Hospital in Quezon City, where he was transferred, he wrote 27 stories about the crash that were later compiled into a book.

He believes there was a reason he survived: "God must have saved me precisely because I had to tell the whole world the legacy that he (Magsaysay) left behind. To tell the country, the people, and the whole world that here was once a man who brought popular democracy to reality in his time."

TILL DEATH DID THEY PART: Mata covered President Magsaysay throughout his three-year tenure in Malacañang which ended in a plane crash on Mt. Manunggal 50 years ago.

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PMA's Magnificent 7 now Sisters of Traveling Grey Pants

From page A1

to speak of then, and the women's barracks had yet to be built.

The women were known as the "Sweet 16" when they were in their plebe (first) year. Eventually, the batch was pared down to seven because of bad grades, health problems—and even romantic intrigues.

The "Magnificent Seven" of PMA Kalasag Lahi Class of 1997 were indeed the cream of the crop.

Salutatorian Leah Lorenzo graduated summa cum laude; Arlene Orejana and Maria Consuelo Nunag were among the top 10 graduates, and Aireen Somera, Sheryl Uy, Marissa Andres and Maria Victoria Blancaflor were in the top third of the class.

Laughter, sorrow

But what a difference 10 years can make: The "Magnificent Seven" have now become the "Sisters of the Traveling Grey Pants."

Their lives have been laced with laughter and sorrow, and they managed to pull through with grit, determination and female bonding, they said.

But by no means can they be considered the "Lucky Seven."

A few months after graduation in 1997, Uy, Lorenzo and some of their classmates were involved in a vehicular accident.

Lorenzo was unhurt; Uy (now Cabasan) became paralyzed because of a spinal injury.

Uy returned to her hometown in the Visayas, got married and had a child.

According to Andres, Uy managed to finish another course, has set up a computer business, and is learning to walk again.

Uy is also preparing her complete disability discharge (CDD) and will be discharged as an Army captain, Andres said.

Of the seven in the first batch of women, only Andres remains single. She is a senior tactical officer at the PMA and the proclaimed "idol" of Cadet First Class Andrelee Mojica, the valedictorian of PMA Maragtas Class of 2007.

Updates

Blancaflor (now Agoncillo), the president of Class 1997, updated the INQUIRER on the other members of the group.

Somera (now Reyes) used to be a helicopter flight instructor.

She was once out driving when she felt a gripping pain in her hands. She was subsequently diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, which causes chronic inflammation of the joints—a devastating disease for someone in her line of work.

Somera, who lost a child because of liver complications, is also filing for CDD.

Orejana, who is with the PMA corps of professors, is married to Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, a member of PMA Marilag Class of 1995 and one of the leaders of the failed Oakwood mutiny in 2003.

(Trillanes is now a senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition.)

Orejana kept her cool during the media frenzy that followed the mutiny. Only a few knew that she lost the child she was carrying at the time.

She is now in Australia taking graduate courses.

Lorenzo (now Santiago) is also in school in Australia. At home, she is an Army captain and infantry company commander assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division in Tanay, Rizal.

Nunag (now Castillo) is a combat pilot based in Mindanao.

Still close

During difficult times, Andres said, the women consoled one another.

"We would go out on weekends and have dinner and conversation," she said.

They see one another only during weddings, and keep in touch by cell phone and e-mail.

They have six children, and counting, among them.

"We are as close now as we were then," said Blancaflor, an Army captain and a tank commander assigned in Capas, Tarlac.

And they take their heroism in stride.

Blancaflor, for example, saw action in the siege of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Camp Abubakar in Maguindanao in 2000.

Lorenzo worked undercover as an intelligence agent before becoming an aide to the then Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Roy Cimatu.

"There's no professional jealousy among us. We support each other," Andres said.

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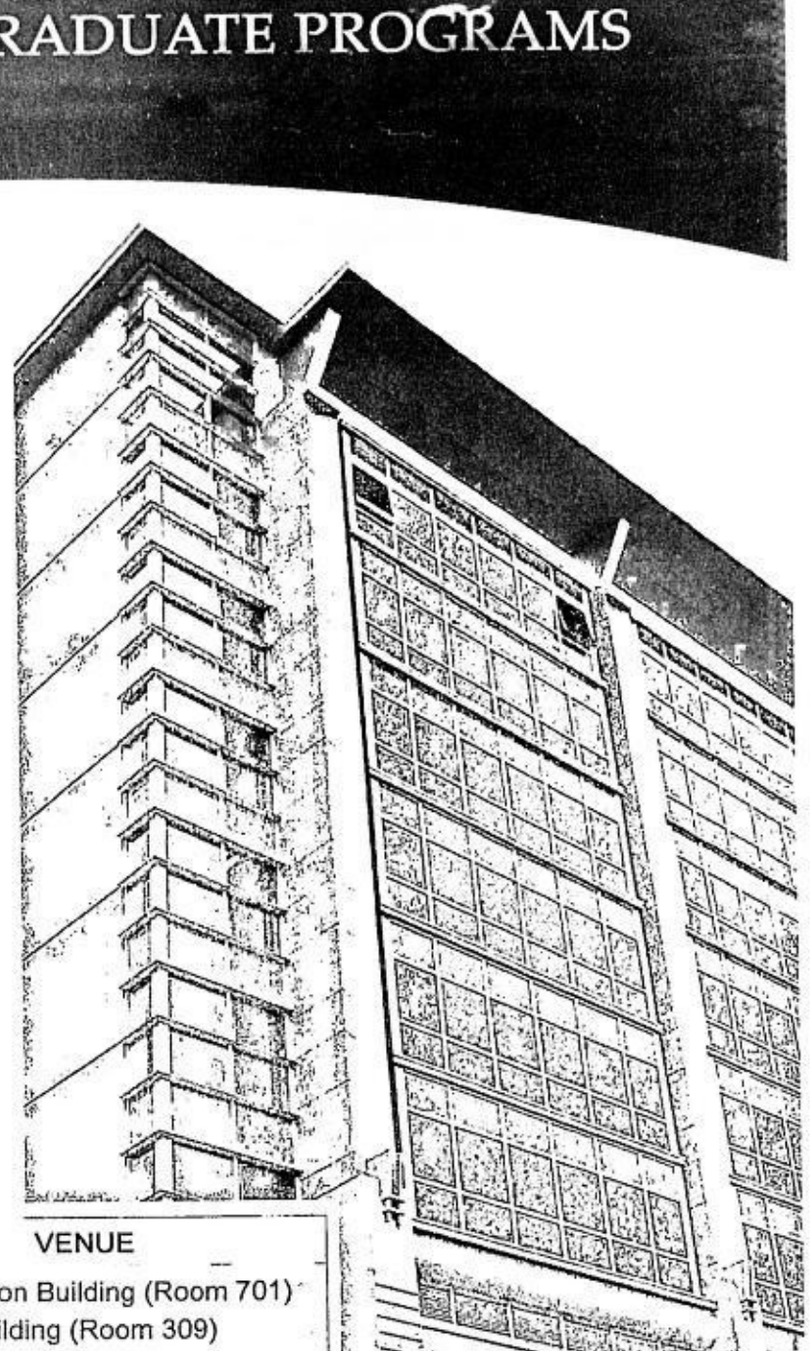

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More Asean summit anomalies seen

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—IRREGULARITIES IN PROJECTS related to the hosting of the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit were not limited to the alleged overpriced lampposts but include the asphalt overlay project in the three cities in Cebu.

Former senator John Osmeña said he has information that corruption also surrounded the asphalting of the roads in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu.

Osmeña said around 75 percent of the project cost may have gone to the pockets of people who initiated the project.

It was not known how much was spent for the asphalting work. The Department of Public Works and Highways was given P800 million for various beautification projects in Cebu for the summit of the Asean leaders held in January, including the P120 million for the now controversial street lighting project.

"The Asean summit was not a favor for the Cebuanos. It was an opportunity for graft by the executive department from Manila," Osmeña said.

Nagiel Bañacia, head of the Cebu City Asean task force, confirmed that it was the DPWH that implemented the asphalt overlay projects in the ceremonial routes and all other major roads in Cebu City.

Asked if the asphalting project was substandard, Bañacia said he could not make a conclusion because he was not a technical person.

"Cebu City really benefited from the asphalting project of the national government. But let the public judge the (asphalting) work," Bañacia said.

DPWH officials, who rarely issued statements on the lamppost issue, could not be reached for comment.

Osmeña expressed doubt over the investigation ordered by President Macapagal-Arroyo on the Asean-related irregularities.

He said the President had been directing the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) to investigate other issues but "no one had been put in jail."

The Visayas Ombudsman learned that some of the lampposts that were installed in Mandaue City cost P220,000 each when similar lampposts, which were also imported from China, were installed in Naga, Cebu for only P16,000 each.

The Ombudsman also learned that at least 30 of the lampposts were installed in Portofino, a private resort on Mactan Island owned by businessman Manuel Zamora.

THE DECORATIVE lamppost roundhead model that cost P220,000 each installed on sidewalks around the Cebu International Convention Center. LITO TECSON/CDN

1M tree seedlings ready for planting

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE Cordillera has produced more than 80 percent of its assignment of raising 1.25 million tree seedlings for planting and the reforestation of the region's critically endangered forests and watersheds.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said the seedlings formed part of the department's massive seedling production program aimed at potting 20 million seedlings nationwide.

As of March 15, the region had already potted 1,055,919 seedlings ready for planting anytime, Samuel Peñafiel, DENR Cordillera director, said.

He said different nurseries in the region have potted the seedlings, courtesy of the DENR provincial offices, local governments, schools, mining companies and people's and government organizations.

The seedling program followed last year's Green Philippine Highways, where trees were planted along major highways in the country.

Peñafiel said Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes wanted to implement the potting program to enhance the bid to "regreen" not only the highways but the country's denuded forests as well.

The DENR and the National Irrigation Administration have reported that the regions' four major rivers—Agno, Magat, Chico and Abra—are now at their critical stages due to the rapid deterioration of watersheds feeding them.

Deforestation caused by erosion, forest fires and massive vegetation have not also spared Mt. Data watershed in Bauko, Mt. Province, a major protected forest reserve and natural park in the region.

Peñafiel said the DENR is encouraging more schools and communities to join the "potting sessions" since they will also benefit from the program.

In Bulacan, a campaign led by environmental groups, lawyers and businessmen will plant 1.5 million trees to revive the Ipo Dam watershed in Norzagaray town, which has been ravaged by timber poachers.

Rodrigo Abinsay, an official of the Manila Water Co. Inc., said about half of the total 6,600 hectares of the watershed needed rehabilitation and reforestation.

Manila Water, the concessionaire for the east zone of Metro Manila since 1997, gets its supply from Ipo Dam.

Abinsay said at an average of 500 trees per hectare, at least half of the 6,000 hectares total land area of Ipo Dam will need one and a half million trees.

During her visit here on Wednesday, former Sen. Loren Legarda, a senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition, has pledged to donate at least 2,000 tree seedlings to help in the campaign.

Legarda led the tree-growing program, Luntiang Pilipinas (Green Philippines), during her stint in the Senate. ***Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon***

Surigao-raised Pichay returns to Ilocos roots

MAGSINGAL, ILOCOS SUR—Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr., a candidate of the administration Team Unity, visited his father's hometown on Saturday and sought his paternal relatives here.

Pichay, who said he last visited Magsingal as a child, left some members of Team Unity who were campaigning in Ilocos Sur so he could go to Barangay San Julian to visit their ancestral house.

"I learned from my father the virtues of industriousness and being street-smart and thrifty," he told a crowd that included his nephews and nieces and Mayor Arlyn Favis.

Pichay said his father, Prospero Sr., was 20 years old when he decided to go to Surigao del Sur before the outbreak of World War II.

"He was young and adventurous. He wanted to seek opportunity in other land," he said.

"The provincial treasurer [in Surigao del Sur] was from Ilocos and he told my father, '*Punta ka dito* (Come here),'" he said.

He said his father settled in Cantilan town where there were five Ilocanos then.

His father started as a clerk and went on to become provincial treasurer like the one who recruited him. His mother worked as a school teacher and went on to become a district supervisor in their province, he said. ***Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon***

REP. PROSPERO Pichay tries out a carriage during a sortie in Ilocos Sur at Baluarte, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Singson's residence. LEONCIO BALBIN JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

'Bejo' declares Leyte gov bid

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—City Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez formally announced last Friday his plan to run for governor of Leyte, a post once held for almost 20 years by his brother during the Marcos dictatorship.

The 72-year-old outgoing city mayor made the announcement while some members of the Team Unity ticket held their grand rally at the Tacloban City Convention Center.

"I am announcing tonight my intention to run for governor of Leyte," the younger brother of former First Lady Imelda Marcos said to the applause of close to 5,000 people who were present during the political rally.

He later said that his decision to run for governor was "final and (there's) no turning back."

"I will run and I expect to win. The people know that when a Romualdez runs for public office, development is not far behind," he said. The city mayor has yet to name who his running mate would be.

Romualdez is serving his third and final term as mayor of this city of over 180,000 residents.

Army checkpoint, militant leader suddenly neighbors

LUCENA CITY—AN ACTIVIST group strongly condemned the Army unit based in Castilla town in Sorsogon for putting up a military checkpoint in front of the house of the president of the national coalition of fishermen Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya).

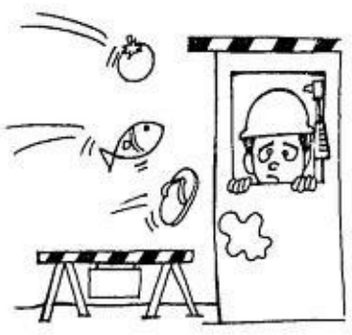
Pamalakaya information officer Gerry Albert Corpuz said that about two weeks ago, elements from the Alpha Company of the Army's 22nd Infantry Battalion based in Castilla town placed a military checkpoint some 10 meters from the house of Pamalakaya's head, Fernando Hicap.

"The one-meter-by-one-meter wooden board is announcing to the residents that they would be subjected to military checkpoint if they pass the area. It aims to monitor the people coming in and out of our chairperson's residence," Corpuz said over the phone.

He called this military action as "sheer state-terrorism."

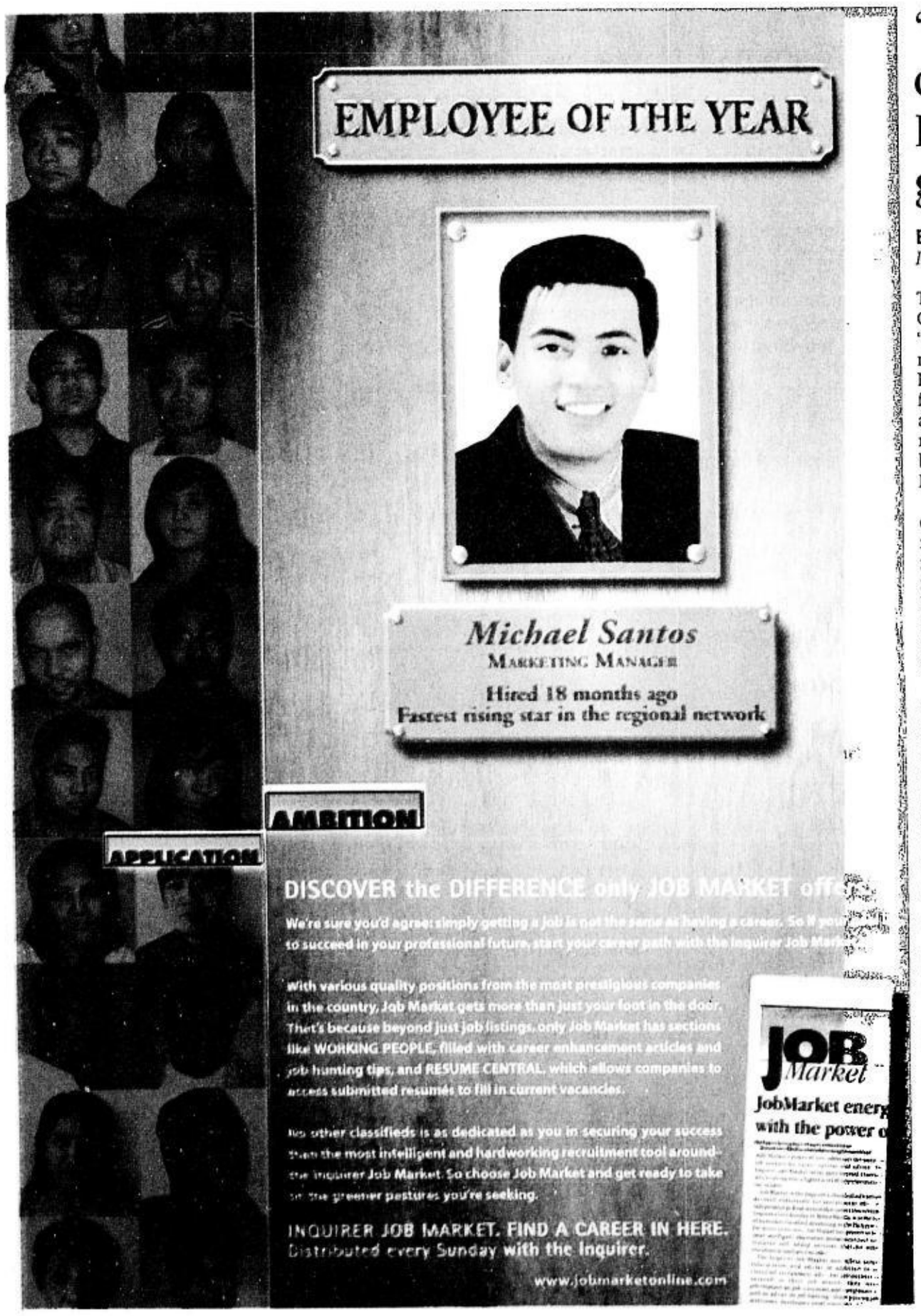
Col. Muhammad Nur Askalani, 901st Infantry Brigade commander based in Villa Hermosa, Daraga, Albay, confirmed the presence of checkpoints not only near the house of Hicap but also in other parts of Castilla, Sorsogon.

"There are actually 30 checkpoints established in Castilla since Dec. 28 as part of the SOT (special operations team) activity of the troops to ensure peace and order in our area of responsibility. Once we ensure the safety of residents in Castilla, we will move to other municipalities," Askalani said.



Corpuz said the military post was placed near Hicap's house to inform the community that the Pamalakaya leader and Anakpawis party-list nominee was under surveillance and that the military was working for his surrender or arbitrary arrest once he returns to his family.

"The entire Hicap clan is under surveillance and consistent threat, harassment and intimidation by the military. This is the game plan being executed by the military command in Castilla to further terrorize his family and Hicap's neighbors," said Corpuz. ***Delfin T. Mallari Jr. and Bobby Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon***



INQUIRER Mindanao

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Punks find hell on the way to Sagada

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Davao City

ALL HE WANTED was to see the flowers of Baguio City during the Panagbenga Festival, perhaps get distracted by their smell and display of colors while he gets "high" with the kind of music that only he and his friends can discern.

Anderson Alonzo, 19, along with friends Jethro Villegas, 22, and Rundren Lao, 25, left Davao on Dec. 6, 2005, upon the invitation of a punk friend from Tarlac.

Punks are described as people who detest all forms of commercialization and dress in somewhat weird ways.

A big gig, where punks pour-out their angst and emotions through poetry and "do-it-yourself" music, was to take place in Tarlac.

Alonzo said the desire to meet new friends and the thrill of another adventure pushed him to accept the invitation.

Gigs, he said, are where punks from all over the country gather around.

When he left Davao, Alonzo only had P100 in his pocket, which his grandmother had given him.

From Davao, the group hitched on trucks and barge, passing through Surigao and Leyte.

Test of creativity

Hitchhiking, he said, is always a test of creativity, especially when it comes to begging for a free ride.

It took the group five days to reach Manila.

He described the travel as part of their struggle as punks, where they test their ability to survive out of limited opportunities and dangerous circumstances.

Upon arriving in Manila, Alonzo and his friends moved around punk communities before heading for Tarlac.

After the gig in Tarlac, he said, his group from Davao was joined by other punks for Baguio to watch the Panagbenga.

But when they arrived in Baguio two days before Valentine's Day last year, no flowers in full bloom welcomed them because it was still two weeks before festival time.

Frustrated and tired because their main purpose in going to Baguio was not taking place yet, Alonzo and his punk friends headed for Sagada in the Mt. Province.

Military

The adventure to Sagada would later introduce them to the Filipino people as the Punks 11.

"We did not have any hint about what will eventually take place. We left Baguio at 7 a.m. We hitched on a truck," Alonzo recounted.

By 12 noon, they reached Buguias town.

There, policemen manning a checkpoint flagged down the truck they were riding in.

"They were in full uniform. In fact they were in full battle gear," he said.

He said as soon as the vehicle came to a halt, the policemen—with guns aimed at them—commanded them to disembark.

"They shouted at us: 'Baba kayo... NPA kayo!' (Get off... you NPAs)," Alonzo said.

He said they were shocked.

Alonzo said the policemen accused them of being part of a group of New People's Army (NPA) rebels, which attacked a military detachment in Mankayan town a few weeks earlier.

He said while cursing them, the policemen ordered them to lie face down on the ground. His companions tried to reason out but the policemen started kicking them.

The truck driver and his assistant were also told to lie face down on the ground.

All of them were later blindfolded and handcuffed and herded to a police camp.

"While we were walking, they insisted we were NPA rebels," Alonzo said.

At the camp, the policemen took all their belongings and prevented them from making contact with anybody.

Alonzo said they were then tortured into confession, their bodies beaten until they were black and blue. Their calls for mercy fell on deaf ears.

Alonzo described his trip to Sagada as hell.

"All we felt was fear. I thought hell was becoming hotter. We feared for our lives. We thought we would be killed," he said.

Alonzo said he only had one wish then. If he got killed, at least his body would be sent home.

"It was an agony of the mind and body. They would douse us with cold water, hit us with wood. Ron Pardino, one of our companions from Laguna, was even electrocuted," he said.

After their first night at the police camp, Alonzo said seven of their colleagues were brought to the Benguet Provincial Jail.

Firearms

He and three others were brought to Mankayan, in the very area that the NPA had raided.

"They asked us to look for firearms but we told them we didn't know where to find them. Then they asked us if we still wanted to go home. Of course in my mind, I said yes," Alonzo said.

They were then brought back to the camp.

During their second night at the police camp, Lao was brought near a cliff where he was repeatedly beaten again.

He found an opportunity to escape and sought help from the National Bureau of Investigation.

Instead of helping Lao, NBI operatives turned him back to the police. He rejoined his fellow punks at Cell No. 12 of the provincial jail.

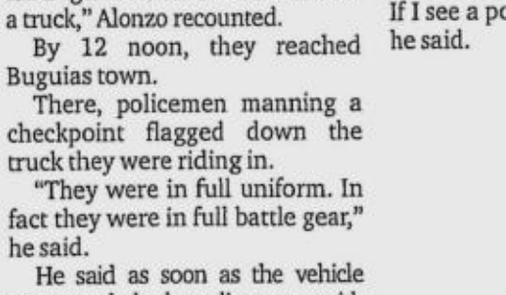
Their ordeal came to the attention of the public and friends and their family started to write letters of appeal.

On Dec. 21, after being imprisoned for almost 11 months, they were finally freed.

The policemen, who took turns in beating them, had only apologized aside from buying plane tickets for him and his friends Lao and Villegas.

Alonzo said for him and his friends, they found that justice rarely works in the Philippines.

"I don't trust authorities either. If I see a policeman, I feel angry," he said.



ANDERSON Alonzo revisits the torture he and the rest of the Punks 11 experienced from the hands of the police. JEFFREY M TUPAS

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2006 ACHIEVEMENTS

▷ NURSING TOPNOTCHERS
DECEMBER 2006

2nd Place	Dervid S. Jungco
3rd Place	Ma. Sophia Francesca D. Cruz
6th Place	Claudette L. De Castro
7th Place	John Mark V. Gonzales
9th Place	Diana E. Mahinay
	Madilyn L. Villanueva
10th Place	Annabelle B. Areola
	Ma. Visitacion R. Manese

▷ MEDICINE TOPNOTCHERS
FEBRUARY 2006

1st Place	Mary Joy Coner, MD
2nd Place	Sergio Apdo, Jr., MD
4th Place	Joy Lourdes Dacumos, MD
5th Place	Ferdinand Lunaria, MD
10th Place	Eirene Mapile, MD

▷ MEDICINE
CONSISTENT 1ST PLACERS
Amapola Dumlao, MD (Feb 2002)
Loubomir Antonio, MD (Feb 2003)
Joselito Javier, MD (Aug 2003)
Elmer Jacinto, MD (Feb 2004)
Christopher Chang, MD (Feb 2005)
Mary Joy Coner, MD (Feb 2006)

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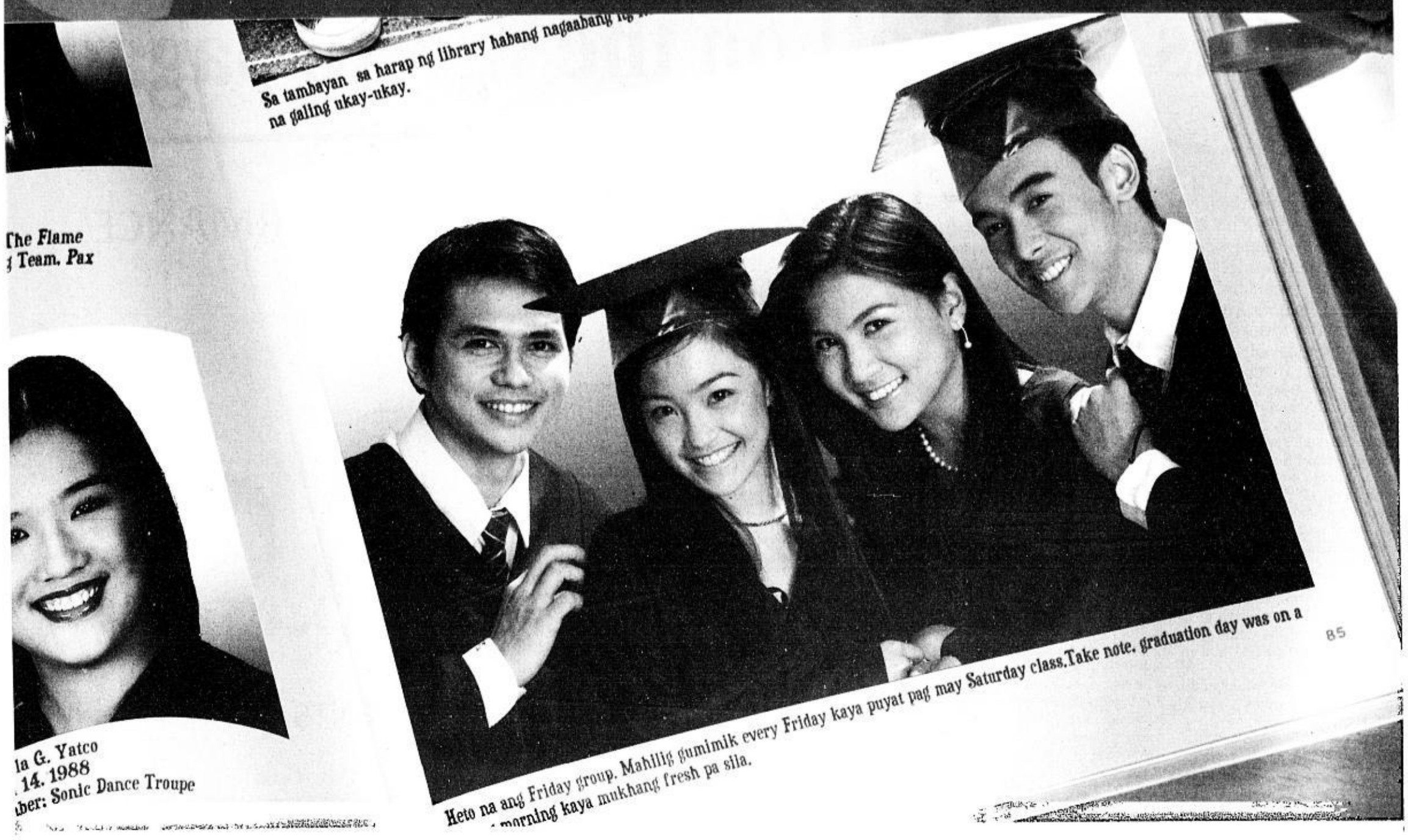

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Julie Palafox Binansagang "suki" dahil madalas mag-load nang mag-load. Para sa kanya, ayt ang pinakamababang Globe reload!

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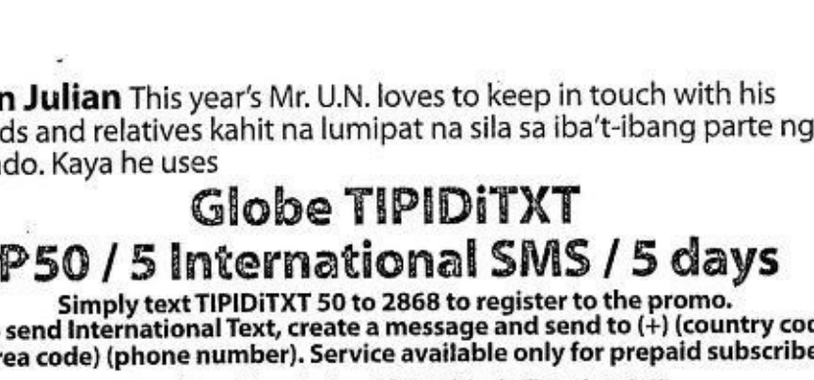

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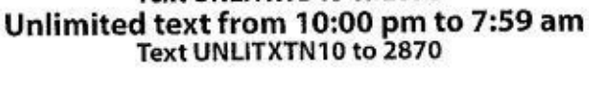

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FEW CHILDREN today have heard of *luksong tinik*. REM ZAMORA

RELEARNING PINOY OUTDOOR GAMES

City children to get kick out of 'sipa'

By Tina G. Santos

GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN children in the neighborhood would gather on the streets and play traditional Filipino games until the sun went down.

Most kids today, especially those who live in urban sprawls like Metro Manila, have probably never have heard of, much less participated in games such as "sipa, tumbang preso, luksong tinik and patintero," among others.

To revive interest in these traditional recreational activities, several private and government organizations have launched the "Larong Pinoy Campaign."

"It is a call to action to save what little awareness people have of Filipino games and promote the benefits of outdoor play for children," said Zinnia Rivera, president and managing director of Johnson & Johnson, a multinational company which is spearheading the campaign.

With the recent kick-off of the drive at the Museo Pambata in Manila, schools and barangay communities not only in the metropolis but nationwide, hopefully, will soon become the playground of children and students participating in different Filipino games.

"Larong Pinoy will engage the kids in learning and playing traditional outdoor games and encouraging friendship, leadership, teamwork and cooperation, among them," Rivera said.

Dean Hercules Callanta of the University of the Philippines College of Human Kinetics said that outdoor play brings with it physical benefits, especially for children, particularly toddlers and teenagers.

"Muscular development is at its peak during these ages. Exercise and play help form healthy and strong bodies as they develop muscular strength, flexibility and endurance," Callanta said.

According to child psychologist Melissa Fernandez-Abaya, traditional outdoor games are not only a good source of exercise but can also help develop skills and values among kids.

"They encourage social interaction among children from different age groups, therefore, they promote healthy competition among them. These games also challenge children to perform better not only in sports but in other future endeavors," she said.

"Children learn so much from playing and they become more confident," added Museo Pambata president Nina Lim-Yuson.

Traditional games, which have been passed on and taught from one generation to another, carry with them the rich Filipino tradition, culture and identity, said Dr. Raul Pertierra, associate professor of sociology and anthropology at the Ateneo de Manila University.

"I believe there is a need to revive children's interest in these games to help them develop a stronger sense of Filipino identity," he claimed, adding that in the past decade, Filipinos have become largely influenced by Western culture and have embraced technological innovations wholeheartedly.

"What is lost is the opportunity to preserve our cultural heritage which is inherent in the hobbies and games, as well as the physical and psychological leadership skills that children can get from playing structured games," he said.

Pertierra lamented that traditional Filipino games are dying out. "In the next 10 years, we can expect less than a thousand kids to know the game mechanics of 'sipa.'"

"But it's not too late," he pointed out. "Reviving the love for our local games revives the spirit of the Filipino and passes it on to the next generation who want to know what it means to be Filipino."

Man hacks brother dead

By Nancy C. Carvajal

RESPONDING POLICEMEN SHOT and wounded a relative of Caloocan Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio when he attacked his brother after midnight yesterday.

"There was no other way to make him stop hacking his brother but to shoot and incapacitate him," operatives from the Police Community Precinct Station 8 told the INQUIRER.

The police said the suspect is a cousin of the congressman.

Chief Insp. Jose Ramirez Valencia said in a report that the suspect, Lheyno Asistio, 36, was high on drugs when he started stabbing himself with two 15-inch bolos.

The incident happened at around 12:30 a.m. inside their house at Interior 129, Lakas ng Mahirap, Barangay 11, Caloocan City.

Lheyno was later taken to the Manila Central University hospital where he remains confined but his brother, Serafin Jr., 29, died of his wounds.

Valencia said that Lheyno attacked the victim when the latter and other family members tried to stop him from hurting himself.

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This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world, and wherever work can be contracted to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

Band of brothers cooks up culinary art center in Hong Kong

By Blanche S. Rivera
Hong Kong Correspondent

HONG KONG—IT was so many summers ago when four boys were sent on what seemed like culinary boot camps in Manila.

Odd, it seemed, for a band of brothers to take up cooking instead of sports or arts or music, but mom Sonia Dator, an Ilongga cook whose home cooking had been so popular with neighbors and friends in Quezon City they often commissioned her to cook for their parties, was adamant.

"I wanted them to learn to cook and prepare for their own birthday parties and also help me with the occasional catering services," Sonia explained.

And so every summer, she would enroll her boys in culinary classes. During the school year, she would ask the teachers in Claret School to allow her sons to sell their products—*yema*, cookies, butterscotch, polvoron and other pastries—so that, she added, they would learn the value of money and enterprise.

Classroom for DH, etc

Decades later, the Dator brothers—Jose Alfonso, Jimson, Jay and Jonas—finally cooked up something huge. And what they serve this part of the world has been sizzling for years.

With their pooled resources, the Dators opened the Culinary Arts Centre-Multicare in Hong Kong in November 2002, the only culinary school owned and operated by a Filipino family here.

Tucked in an old building on Wing Lok Street, Sheung Wan, the CAC resembles a typical Filipino kitchen brimming with colorful spices, meat cut posters, and an array of kitchen treasures.

The Dators imported equipment from the Philippines because they wanted to make sure that the kitchen setup where their students undergo training could be replicated in their homes in the Philippines.

The CAC is a classroom of domestic helpers on Sundays and bank managers, flight attendants and other busy professionals on weeknights.

It has graduated over 1,200 students, mostly Filipino domestics, since 2002, and has evolved from being a strictly cooking school to a resource center for livelihood and entrepreneurial skills.

From only two classes—cooking and baking—in 2002, the CAC now offers at least 17 two- to 10-month courses like Asian and Western cooking, fruit and vegetable carving, menu planning, wedding planning, computer literacy and even agribusiness.

Chefs on Parade medalist

Its Multicare program, handled by registered Filipino nurse Emie Skinner, offers first aid, aromatherapy massage, caregiver, reflexology and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation courses. At least six former students are now working in Canada.

While the CAC initially involved the entire Dator household—with dad Jimmy in charge of the administrative tasks and mom Sonia handling some courses—only Jay of the four brothers remain focused on the day-to-day running of the center.

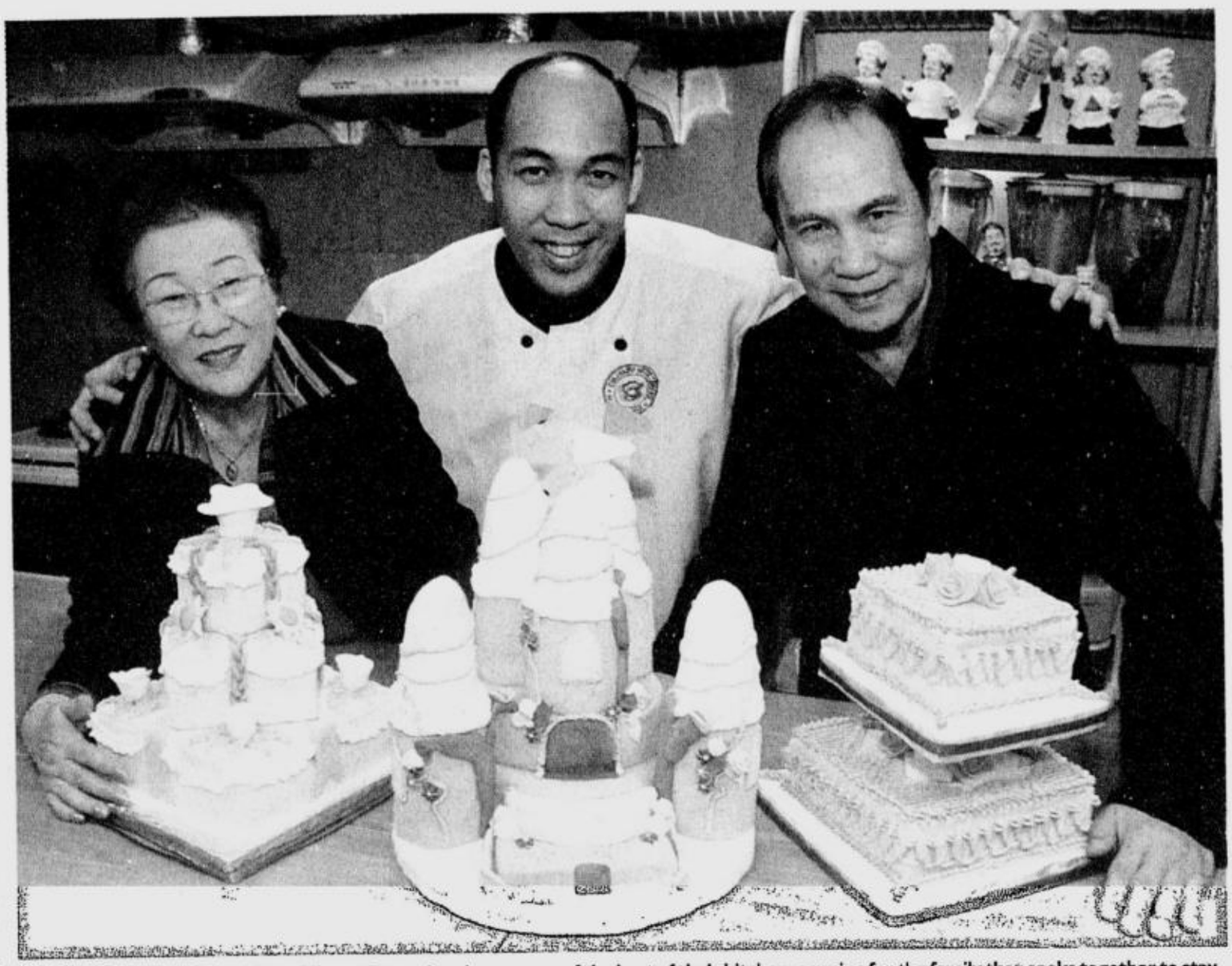
"Culinary schools have become a trend now, but we have been here even before that," said Jay, program director of the CAC.

"Some people go into this business like they're just playing, but we don't. This is a school, so even we, the staff, continue to upgrade our learning as well," he said.

These recent summers, Jay would either fly home to Manila or the United States to update his culinary skills.

Jay and Jimson were both teaching in an international school and doing some training for another Filipino school here that offered computer courses when they decided to start the family's culinary business.

A graduate of hotel and restaurant management from the University of Santo Tomas and silver medalist in the 1994 Chefs on Parade in Manila, Jay recalled how maids studying at the Filipino school would often ask him where they could take cooking lessons.



WITH PROUD parents Sonia and Jimmy Dator, Jay shows some of the best of their kitchen, a recipe for the family that cooks together to stay happily together. Of the four brothers, only Jay is now focused on the school's daily operations. DANTE PERALTA/HONGKONG NEWS

The queries prompted the two brothers to do their own feasibility study on the need for culinary training and found out that many Filipino helpers here lacked not only culinary skills but housekeeping skills as well.

"It's very unfortunate," said Sonia, who teaches *lutong pang-carinderia* and meat processing. "They do not know how to cook! You'd think because they are employed in households, they would be good but all of them know only *adobo*."

She noted that the Filipino maids here were more adept at Chinese cuisine because that is what they have to do for their employers. Their families back in the provinces, however, do not always appreciate Chinese food.

This is one reason they study at the CAC before they go back home for good, Sonia said. Others are keen on putting up a *carinderia* or bakery when they retire from domestic work here.

Said Jimmy: "*Basta pagkain, hindi ka malulugi kasi lahat kumakain eh.*" The family has several success stories in its book to prove that.

Students' success stories

One student had opened her own café in Miami, Florida; another a fusion restaurant in San Francisco; and yet another a 24-hour *carinderia* in Tondo that was such a big hit, she opened another one in Pangasinan.

There were countless others who now have their own bakeshops. Some, who are still in Hong Kong, have so impressed their employers with their cooking that the employers agreed to shoulder the cost of their training at the CAC.

"The return-on-investment may not be as high as other businesses, but this is more of a service to the Filipino community anyway," Jimmy said.

"We have just enough profits to sustain the business. As you see, we are still here because there is learning satisfaction among our students," he added.

Ex-Pinay judoka struts her stuff in Kiba

By Senen C. Bravo

NOEMIE ESGUERRA-CANdari's career in judo was already peaking when she got pregnant.

"I felt that my advancement in judo ground to a halt. I had a hard time accepting what happened," says Noemi in Filipino, 35, a BS Math graduate from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

Two days before giving birth in November 2000, the father of the child, a teammate on the national team, left for Japan to compete. The husband could provide financial support for only six months.

She followed him and left her son Nicko with her brother in Laguna, promising that she would come back and take her son to Japan.

Japan is not new to Noemie, who had represented the Philippines a number of times.

She first competed during the 1995 Fukuoka Games, followed by more tournaments and training.

Jaylo's help

In 2000, she joined a crack team which saw action in the Osaka Asian Games in the winter months of March to May, spending hours training in Toyama City.

"The weather really brought out the best in us," says Noemie.

Upon her return, she was again up for a qualifier for an upcoming SEA Games. Like most national athletes, Rizal Memorial Coliseum hosted her training.

NOEMIE ESGUERRA-CANDARI at the peak of her career with Japanese judo instructors and judges.

Despite a strict training regimen, she still weighed at -52 kilos, above the competitive -48 kilos. Later, she found out she was pregnant.

"I felt sorry for myself, having squandered my time in judo," says Noemie.

In the same year Capt. Reynaldo Jaylo, then judo's National Sports Association head, asked her to be his secretary and offered her an organizing committee job for the SEA Games.

The following year another opportunity came her way, again courtesy of Captain Jaylo. A refereeing seminar would take place in Fukuoka, Japan, after which participants were to earn a license. With her P20,000 savings she decided to give it a go.

At the Kodokan Judo Institute, Japan's prestigious school, Noemie went on honing her skills in a sport rife with injury.

"We were not insured and we're on our own if any untoward incident happened to us," says Noemie.

She would single out the Japanese's honesty as one of their greatest traits.

On her way to work one day, she lost her cell phone while on a train. "I called the person who found my unit and we agreed to meet. He returned the phone at once," says Noemie.

Noodles and eggs

In May 2002, Noemie got a cultural visa through sponsorship. Five-year cultural visa holders, she says, must have a stable income.

She found a job at a five-star hotel, cleaning rooms from 8 in the morning up to 5 in the afternoon for a year and a half. She earned 100,000 yen (roughly P42,000) a month. After work she had to rush back to the Kodokan Institute. An OFW, she says, must earn at least 300,000 yen a month to survive.

A Filipino friend hosted her stay, sparing her of rent and other expenses.

"I came to the point of eating only two times a day, surviving on noodles and eggs," she says.

She would always avail of a 50-percent promo at supermarkets. Belt-tightening measures also took her to using a coin shower room which ran for only 10 minutes for 100 yen.

During her stint at the hotel, she met a member of the Kapisanan ng Migranteng Pilipino (KPM) and became a volunteer.

"I was on my way to the church when I found these people handing out leaflets to passersby," she says.

Noemie says the organization has enlightened her about Japanese men: Husbands decide on budgetary matters; wives can only have a say if they are employed; couples stay in separate rooms several years into their married lives.

Gold, silver medals

When Noemie renewed her cultural visa at the Immigration office, she didn't expect to be interrogated and given an ultimatum: Leave the country in one week.

"I made the mistake of telling them that I was receiving allowance from KPM which was against their law," says Noemie.

She bailed herself out with a gold and two silver medals she earlier won in a competition held in Japan.

"Those medals showed my sincerity in staying in their country," says Noemie.

She found another job at a phone card company in 2003, and got a working visa through her employer's sponsorship.

Multitasking

Her working hours started from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. She was off again from 7 p.m.-3 a.m. as a cook and bartender. She earned 8,000 yen in the bar.

In 2004, she made it as marketing manager in another telephone company which sells phone cards and cell units. In the same year, Noemie's employer sponsored her sister-in-law's working visa. Her sister-in-law left the Philippines in 2006 and is now staying with her in Kiba, Japan.

" My sister-in-law took care of Nicko while I was in Japan and I'm grateful to her," says Noemie.

When her mother died in 2005, it was a painful decision not to attend her wake. She had just arrived from a vacation in the Philippines.

If not for her lawyer who offered to forego his fees, she wouldn't be able to cover the funeral expenses.

"He's the lawyer handling my visa papers. When he told me to just save the money and send it to my brother I was really overwhelmed," says Noemie.

Teaching

In her spare time, Noemie takes the time teaching at Mitsubishi which has a sports foundation offering judo, aikido, karatedo, kendo and yaido.

The foundation also donated 40 judogis (kimono) to UE Manila where her nephew is a member of its judo team.

In January 2004, Nicko finally arrived in Japan and met his father in person.

"Before they used to talk only on the phone. Now that Nicko is with us we can share a happy life together," says Noemie.

And she is raring to spend quality time with their son on the mat, throwing their weight around.

G8 plus Five launch biodiversity initiative

GERMANY—ENVIRONMENT ministers from 13 major nations agreed here on Friday to seek the economic value of biodiversity to help preserve Earth's depleted storeroom of life.

The meeting at the Cecilienhof chateau, where the 1945 Potsdam agreement that reshaped Europe was hammered out, gathered together the Group of Eight industrialized countries and the big five of the developing world—Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa.

Inspired by last year's Stern Report, a shock report on the economic cost of climate change, the 13 ministers called for a similar study on the value of biodiversity.

They also explored avenues for resolving the global warming crisis.

"In a global study, we will initiate the process of analyzing the global economic benefit of biological diversity, the costs of the loss of biodiversity and the failure to take protective measures versus the costs of effective conservation," the so-called Potsdam Initiative said.

The idea will be put to the G8 summit in the Baltic Sea resort of Heiligendamm from June 6-8 for its endorsement.

German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel, chairing the two-day meeting, told reporters biodiversity "is not just an issue for bird-watchers." It was treated as "a poor relation," granted only rare and fleeting attention by politicians or economists, he said.

As many as 150 species become extinct each day, or a thousand times faster than natural processes, yet there was lamentably little knowledge about what these species did and whether they could be of value, he said.

Biological diversity was not just the key to food supplies, through soil fertility and healthy fisheries, it also amounted to a goldmine for the pharmaceutical industry, said Gabriel.

Separately, the ministers swapped some ideas about how to tackle global warming, an issue that remains mired in problems.

The 13 countries account for more than two-thirds of the world's carbon emissions, the invisible gases that trap heat from the Sun and threaten havoc with the planet's delicate climate system.

"There has been no negotiations," stressed Gabriel, saying the goal was to find common ground ahead of the Heiligendamm summit.

Breaching a low-key security ring, Greenpeace activists aboard a sailing vessel and five Zodiac dinghies sailed up the Havel river next to the chateau, and unfurled banners demanding urgent action against global warming by the G8.

Protestors briefly heckled ministers at a photo opportunity at the nearby chateau of Sans Souci, describing the G8 as "false friends of the climate" system.

Earth's surface temperatures have been steadily rising for the last few decades, driven by the release of billions of tonnes of carbon gases from burning fossil fuels.

The only worldwide pact for reducing these dangerous emissions is the United Nations' Kyoto Protocol, which runs out in 2012 but will deliver a cut of only a few percentage points compared with 1990.

That reduction will apply only to industrialized countries, not big developing ones, which do not have binding, targeted pledges under the present format and are now becoming hefty polluters in their own right. *AFP*

FOR THE KING Skydivers from World Team build a Royal Lotus Flower freefall formation consisting of 98 people over Prachuap Khiri Khan province on the Gulf of Thailand, March 16. The event was held to honor Thai King Bhumibhol Adulyadej, the world's longest-reigning monarch, for his 80th birthday later this year. AP

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WorldBriefs

UN accepts Iranian leader's trip to New York

UNITED NATIONS—The UN Security Council on Friday accepted Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's request to defend his country's nuclear program when the 15-nation body votes on arms and financial sanctions against Tehran. The Iranian leader wants to address the council before members raise their hands on the resolution but no date has been set for a vote, said South African UN Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, this month's council president. A draft resolution introduced to the council on Wednesday would ban all Iranian arms exports but not imports and freeze financial assets abroad of 28 individuals, groups and companies. These include the state-owned Bank Sepah and some commanders of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps. The measure requires Iran to halt uranium enrichment and the processing of nuclear fuel within 60 days after passage or face the possibility of additional sanctions. The United States has to issue a visa for Ahmadinejad. State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack could not say whether a visa would be issued but noted that Washington had "in the past issued visas for him as well as his traveling party when they have gone to the UN." *Reuters*

White House cites hazy memories in firings

WASHINGTON—The White House is backing away from earlier comments that the idea of dismissing federal prosecutors might have originated with top aides to President George W. Bush. A spokesperson also said it had not decided whether to honor subpoenas demanding congressional testimony from Bush aides. At the same time, support for Attorney General Alberto Gonzales over the firings of the eight prosecutors eroded further Friday from within Bush's Republican Party. The fracas over the firings has added to Bush's problems early in his final two years as a lame-duck president beleaguered by an unpopular war in Iraq. An energized Democratic Party has stepped up the heat since winning control of both chambers of Congress in elections last November. *AP*

3 New York cops indicted in 50-shot case

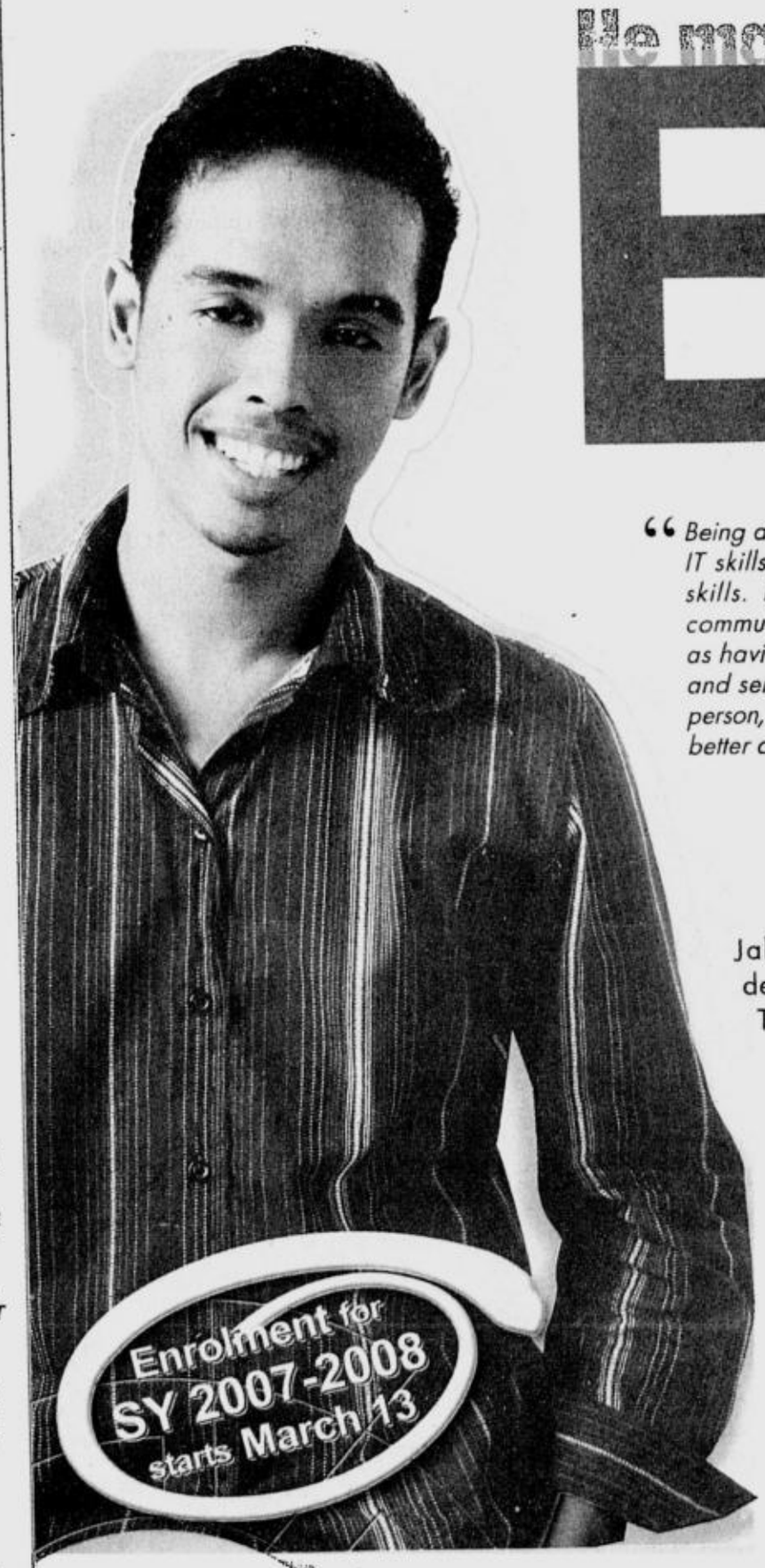
NEW YORK—A grand jury voted Friday to indict three city police detectives in the killing of an unarmed 23-year-old black man who died in a burst of 50 police bullets outside a strip club hours before he was to be married last year, defense lawyers and police union leaders said Friday night. The jury charged two of the detectives—Gescard F. Isnora, an undercover officer who fired the first shot, and Michael Oliver, who fired 31 shots—with manslaughter, two people with direct knowledge of the case said. The third detective, Marc Cooper, who fired four shots, faces a lesser charge of reckless endangerment, those two people said. Isnora and Cooper are black; Oliver is white. They were among five police officers who fired into a gray Nissan Altima carrying the bridegroom, Sean Bell, and two friends during a chaotic confrontation in Jamaica, Queens, early on the morning of Nov. 25. Neither Bell nor his friends, both of whom were wounded, were armed, although the police officers apparently believed that they were. The grand jury reached its decision after three days of deliberations and nearly two months of hearing evidence in an emotionally charged case whose stark outlines—five officers firing 50 bullets at three unarmed men who had been out celebrating—prompted an outpouring of anger in some minority communities, and widespread comparisons to the death of Amadou Diallo, an unarmed African street peddler who was felled by 19 of 41 police officers' bullets fired at him in 1999. *NYT*

UK soldier's death in US attack called unlawful

LONDON—A British soldier who died four years ago after an American pilot fired on a British military convoy in Iraq was killed unlawfully, a coroner ruled Friday. "I find there was no lawful authority to fire on the convoy," said Andrew Walker, the assistant deputy coroner of Oxfordshire. He called the attack on the soldier, 25-year-old Lance Cpl. Matthew Hull, an "assault" and added, "There was no lawful reason for it, and in that respect it was criminal." The death has already been investigated by the US military, which concluded that the shooting was an understandable mistake and that no one need be disciplined. Walker's ruling does not mean anyone will face charges in Hull's death. But it does provide a resolution of sorts to a high-profile case in which the US military has come under sustained criticism for the attack and for the Pentagon's failure, in the view of the soldier's family and of Walker, to cooperate with the British investigation. *NYT*

Changing places with visitors, prisoners escape

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—Ten inmates in a British military prison in Basra carried out an audacious escape plan over the past several days: they switched places with visitors, British authorities said on Friday. An 11th detainee was missing, but no one appeared to have been substituted for him, British authorities said. The prison is on the outskirts of Basra on one of the British bases in the area. The escape came to light on Thursday, when it became apparent that "one person was not who he said he was," said the spokesperson. The military began to investigate and found that nine other internees were also substitutes. The real ones had walked out the door, apparently after swapping clothes with their willing stand-ins, British officials said. *NYT*



The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

N. Korea: No unfreezing of funds, no nuke shutdown

BEIJING—NORTH KOREA WILL NOT SHUT down its nuclear facilities until the United States releases all funds frozen in a Macau bank, the communist state's chief nuclear negotiator said Saturday.

"If the United States does not remove all of its restriction on our funds at Banco Delta Asia (BDA), we cannot shut down our nuclear facilities at Yongbyon," Kim Kye-gwan told reporters on arrival in Beijing.

Kim's comments were North Korea's first reaction to the US Treasury's announcement on Wednesday that it had cleared the way for the release of about $25 million of North Korean funds frozen in the Macau-based BDA.

In its ruling, the US Treasury barred US banks from dealing with BDA, an institution it said had laundered money for reclusive North Korea.

But the move allowed Macau authorities to decide what to do with the cash after the bank was left in receivership.

Asked if North Korea would stop some of the operations in Yongbyon if only part of the frozen funds were released, Kim said: "(In that case) operations won't stop at all," reported South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

As to a visit to North Korea by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, Kim said: "The entry by IAEA staff will come only after Yongbyon is shut down. There would be no reason for them to come as long as Yongbyon is not shut down." Christopher Hill, chief US envoy on North Korea, said Saturday the BDA issue "will not pose an obstacle to the six-party talks." "I'm quite sure we will not be talking about the BDA issue any more in a couple of days," Hill said.

A pro-Pyongyang newspaper on Friday had hailed US moves to resolve financial sanctions against North Korea as a "landmark event," raising hopes for progress in long-running disarmament talks.

Kim and Hill are in Beijing for Monday's start of the next round of six-party negotiations, which group the two Koreas, China, the United States, Russia and Japan. *AFP*

Ex-spy slams US officials for blowing her cover

PLAME AP

WASHINGTON—A GLAMOROUS former CIA spy has accused the Bush administration of maliciously blowing her cover, in an Iraq war political scandal that has a top White House aide heading for jail.

Valerie Plame, 43, broke her silence over a drama clouding President George W. Bush's second term, using a congressional hearing Friday to accuse officials of exposing her to avenge her diplomat husband's criticism of the drive to war.

"It was a terrible irony that administration officials were the ones who destroyed my cover," said Plame, who portrayed herself as an innocent victim of a political firestorm whipped up over the 2003 invasion.

The blonde former intelligence officer, whose appearance drew a paparazzi-style pack of photographers into the staid House of Representatives committee room, also accused Bush aides of tainting the intelligence services.

"I feel passionately as an intelligence professional about the creeping insidious politicizing of our intelligence process," Plame said.

She told the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee that such actions could wreak lasting damage on America's crucial intelligence capacity, which plays a key role in the "war on terror." "If our government cannot even protect my identity, future foreign agents who might consider working with the Central Intelligence Agency and providing needed intelligence would think twice." Plame was constrained by the details she could give in an open, public hearing as even though she has retired from the CIA, she is still bound by its restrictions on classified information.

As she spoke, a pink-garbed anti-war protestor edged into camera range behind her, with a T-shirt reading "Impeach Bush Now." Plame was at the center of the so-called CIA leak case which erupted when her husband Joseph Wilson wrote a July 2003 opinion piece in the New York Times criticizing Bush's case for war against Iraq.

She contends White House officials then deliberately leaked her name to the media, to ruin her career, and punish Wilson for his actions. *AFP*

Palestinians to vote in new unity government

GAZA CITY—THE PALESTINIAN parliament was set to vote in a long-awaited unity government Saturday amid hopes it will end a turbulent year of deadly power struggles, international isolation and economic hardship.

Lawmakers were expected to give near-unanimous approval to the broad-based cabinet, which unites the rival Fatah and Hamas factions, in a parliamentary session due to open at 11 a.m. (0900 GMT).

The vote was to follow a speech by prime minister designate Ismail Haniya in which the Hamas leader was to present the incoming government and its program to MPs. President Mahmuod Abbas was also expected to give a brief address.

Haniya's speech will be closely followed by Israel and the West for clues to the new government's position on issues key to restarting peace talks and resuming much needed Western aid to the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority.

Israel has already denounced the unity government and called on the international community to maintain the boycott it adopted last year after the Islamists of Hamas took power.

The so-called Quartet of major players in the peace process—the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States—has been calling on the new government to renounce violence and recognize Israel and past peace deals for the flow of aid to resume.

The European Union and the United States have both given the unity cabinet a guarded welcome, adopting a wait-and-see approach.

"We will wait until the government is actually in place and we have an understanding of what their platform will be before we make any final judgments about it," US State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack said Thursday.

France and Russia have distanced themselves from the Quartet demands and indicated a greater willingness to work with the incoming Palestinian government. *AFP*

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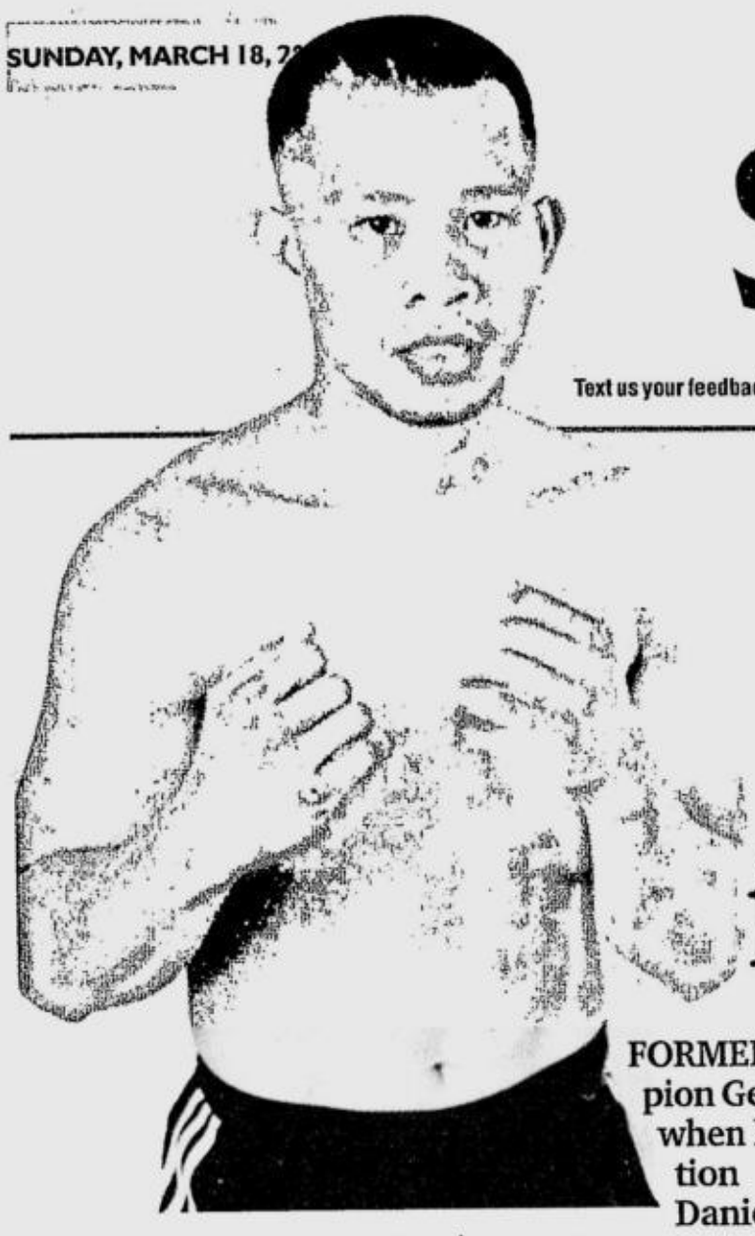

Peñalosa underdog in title fight

FORMER WORLD SUPER FLYWEIGHT CHAMpion Gerry Peñalosa takes a final stab at glory when he challenges World Boxing Organization (WBO) super bantamweight king Daniel Ponce De Leon today at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

GERRY Peñalosa hopes to annex yet another world title when he challenges Mexican Daniel Ponce De Leon (right photo) for the WBO super bantamweight belt.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/ROB DELORENZO

The bout is the chief undercard to the big "Fearless" card featuring defending champion Marco Antonio Barrera against Juan Manuel Marquez in a showdown for the WBC super featherweight title promoted by Oscar De la Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions.

The 26-year-old Ponce De Leon (30-1, 28 KOs), will be defending his WBO crown for the fourth time against Peñalosa, 34, in a classic match-up between youth and experience.

Both Peñalosa (51-5-2, 34 KOs) and Ponce De Leon came in at an exact 122 lbs at yesterday's weigh-in held at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas.

Boxing experts, however, expect

PEÑALOSA/ A22

Incredible Hall-of-Fame challenge for Gerry

Recah Trinidad

COMMENTARY

THE CONTEST IS SURREAL, TO SAY the least.

It's unfair but former world boxing champion Gerry Peñalosa, blessed with neat Hall-of-Fame skills, seeks ultimate recognition in a brawl that would require the blasting of established brutal barriers in boxing.

The venue is the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, not the Colosseum in Rome.

That means Peñalosa, 34, will not be pushed and fed to the hungry lions.

But going by normal standards, there was enough reason for the Nevada Athletic Commission to disallow Peñalosa's blind challenge for the WBO super bantamweight (122 lbs) crown of Mexican Daniel Ponce de Leon.

De Leon, 26, is a lot younger, basi-

INCREDIBLE/ A22

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GILBERT VIOLANTE
Valenzuela City

LUZON winner
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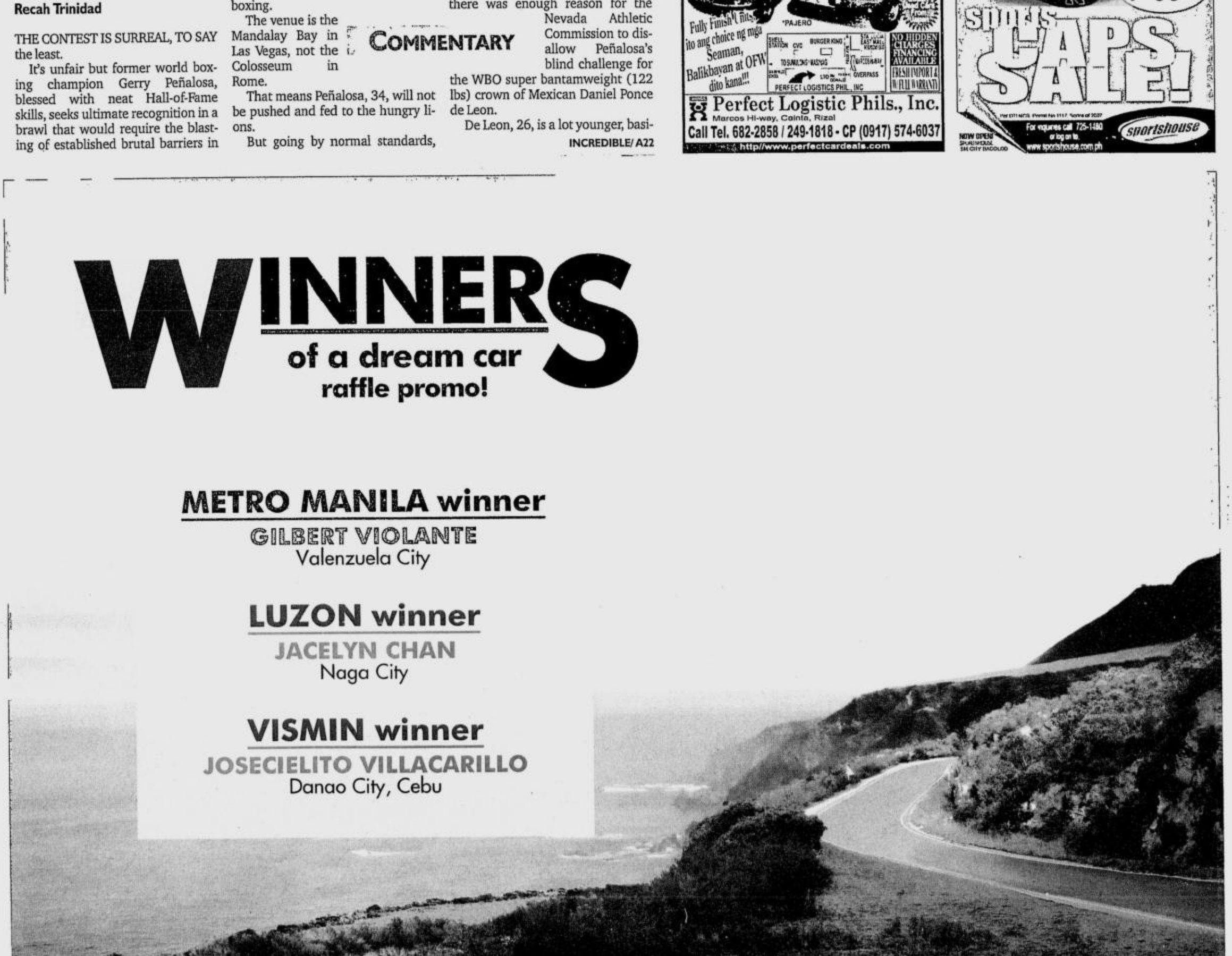


MEXICAN gladiators Marco Antonio Barrera (left) and Juan Manuel Marquez are ready to rumble. AP

BARRERA-MARQUEZ

'Neighbors' paths finally cross

LAS VEGAS—MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA and Juan Manuel Marquez grew up in neighboring towns in Mexico.

Now the 33-year-old world champions are finally going to meet in the ring. Barrera and Marquez will fight Saturday night for Barrera's WBC 59-kilo (130-pound) belt.

Barrera (63-4, 42 KOs) weighed in at 59 kilos (130 pounds), and Marquez (46-3 with one draw and 35 KOs) at 58.5 kilos (129 pounds) on Friday. Marquez, who was a champion at 57 kilos (126 pounds), did not seem worried about being lighter than Barrera.

"I'm going to be very strong," Marquez said. "I'm very concentrated on this fight and ready to win.

"If Barrera wants to box, I will box him. If Barrera wants to exchange, I will exchange. Whatever he brings to the table, I will do it."

A boisterous crowd chanted Marquez's name as the fighters posed for photographs on a stage at the Mandalay Bay.

"This is great for me," Marquez said through a translator. "I see my people backing me up. I'm ready to go the 12 rounds or whatever."

Barrera had little to say after the weigh-in.

"I'm ready to go," Barrera said through a translator.

As Mexican stars, the two fighters have shown great respect for each other. But earlier the week, Marquez predicted that he would knock Barrera out.

Barrera's reply?

"A lot of people dream of knocking out Barrera," Barrera said. "That's all it is—a dream."

Barrera is winding down a decorated 18-year career, but he clearly isn't coasting into retirement.

Pacquiao next

Both fighters hope to parlay a victory into a big-money fight with Filipino Manny Pacquiao.

Pacquiao stopped Barrera in 2003. Six months later, Marquez fought Pacquiao to a draw in a memorable bout.

Marquez is also looking to gain the acclaim he feels he has been denied.

"This will be the start of getting all the fights I should be getting," Marquez said. AP

No promises, says Pacman

Champ vows to pursue bid for seat in congress

By Musong Castillo

CHARISMATIC PEOPLE'S CHAMPION MANNY Pacquiao left for the United States last night with no promise of an early knockout or a victory but only his best when he slugs it out with Jorge Solis on Apr. 14.

Speaking before a packed conference while endorsing the Party-list ng Bayaning Atleta (PBA), Pacquiao didn't give a prediction on the fight's outcome despite being continuously pressed by mediamen.

"I've never made any promises even in my previous fights except that I'll do everything in my power to bring honor to the country," said the 28-year-old Pacquiao in Filipino.

"I'll just do my best."

Pacquiao is slated to fight the Mexican Solis at the Alamodome in San Antonio. And part of his reason to temper his confidence is his foe's sterling record: Solis is undefeated in 32 fights and 23 of his victories came via knockout.

"My opponent is also good, it'll be hard to call the fight," he said.

Pacquiao also belied reports that he has not been in serious training and that he's taking his next foe lightly.

"I've sparred for 56 rounds so far and I've been training non-stop for three weeks now," he said.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao said that he is still committed to running for a congressional seat in his native Gen. Santos City.

"It is my decision to run and I have to [run] because for so long, nothing good has happened in Gen. Santos," he said.

The former bakery help said he sees no problem in dividing his time between his lucrative profession and politics.

"I see no problem with that. All it takes is discipline," said Pacquiao. "I just have to drop some of my extra-curricular activities and I'll even have time for my family."

During the launch for the party-list, Pacquiao was joined by professional basketball luminaries such as Alvin Patrimonio, Willie Miller, Mark Telan, Terry Saldaña and party-list nominee Jerry Codiñera.

PACQUIAO

CODIÑERA

TALE OF THE TAPE

PONCE DE LEON		PENALOSA
26	AGE	34
30-1, 28 KO's	RECORD	51-5-2, 34 KO's
93%	KNOCKOUT PERCENTAGE	66%
Southpaw	STANCE	Southpaw
70"	REACH	65"
5'5	HEIGHT	5'5
Joel Hernandez	TRAINER	Freddie Roach
Chihuahua, Mexico	HOMETOWN	San Carlos City
Power, Youth	PERCEIVED ADVANTAGE	Technical Skills, Experience
Oscar De la Hoya	PROMOTER	Oscar De la Hoya
Joel De la Hoya	MANAGER	Freddie Roach

Peñalosa underdog...

From page A21

Ponce De Leon to climb the ring at around 135 lbs, while Peñalosa is expected to be at around 126 for the showdown.

The match showcases the technically superior Filipino against the unorthodox, power-punching Mexican.

The bouts will be telecast starting at 9:30 a.m. by ABS-CBN, with a replay at 7 p.m. on Studio 23 and tomorrow from 2 to 6 p.m. also at Studio 23.

Sources in Las Vegas said Ponce De Leon had been installed a prohibitive favorite to defeat Peñalosa. As of yesterday, the betting line for the fight had been totally scrapped with Peñalosa perceived as having no chance of beating the bigger Mexican.

However, a good number of Filipino boxing experts have not totally counted out an upset win by Peñalosa based on his impressive demolition of Mauricio Martinez last October.

Filipino superstar Manny Pacquiao was scheduled to fly to Los Angeles last night to be at ringside and cheer for his close pal Peñalosa. He is also expected to keep a close watch on the Barrera-Marquez bout, with the winner possibly meeting him in a big money fight this year.

Pacquiao sparred yesterday at the Wild Card Gym in Manila then took the 10:30 p.m. PAL flight to Los Angeles after attending a press conference for a party-list group at a hotel in Manila.

Sportsman Antonio L. Aldeguer and Cebu boxing impresario Rex 'Wakee' Salud, who had both managed Peñalosa, acknowledged the tough assignment of their former ward, but noted that Peñalosa's superior skills may just carry him to victory.

WBO Asia-Pacific chairman Leon Panoncillo said Peñalosa has a chance if he can withstand Ponce De Leon's punches.

Also appearing in the undercard is hot Filipino prospect Diosdado "Prince" Gabi, who will be seeing action in an 8-round fight against Mexican Antonio Cochero.

Gabi is coming off first-round knockout wins against former world champion Mauricio Pastrana and Felipe Rivas.

The fight card also has Demetrius Hopkins going up against Steve Forbes; Juan Alberto Rosas versus Sergio Espinoza; Ashanti Jordan against Eric Molina; and Anthony Martinez against Jesus Villareal.

Salven. Lagumbay, contributor

Incredible challenge for Gerry

From page A21

cally bigger, and definitely stronger.

It's an abnormal pairing, which would've been scrapped by legit world boxing bodies, namely the WBC, WBA and IBF.

In fact, weeks before the formal fight announcement, there had been calls for Peñalosa, a normal super fly, to drop the blind bid for De Leon's crown.

Peñalosa, who had already retired once before, was warned with absolute concern that he was being unfair to himself.

Sorry, Peñalosa retorted, but this would be his last shot at redemption.

So what if he's out there alone like an old long-distance runner left to go for the sprints gold?

Out there in the ring today, with his vow for a KO win, Peñalosa has no choice but replace with bombs the knives he usually smuggles into the battle scene.

Of course, for the second time in his career, Peñalosa has looked and sounded terribly hungry, bristling with young fire again.

All told, though, he would have to again surpass himself and break barriers if he's to succeed.

He not only has to be stronger and greater than when he outpointed Hiroshi Kawashima in wintry Tokyo to capture the WBC super flyweight crown in February 1997.

Peñalosa would have to be doubly greater than he had ever been.

That didn't seem physically possible anymore.

But in the surreal world of prizefighting, an incredible win should instantly enroll Peñalosa at the boxing Hall of Fame.

SEABA CHAMPIONS CUP

Former PBA import Nwosu eyed to boost PBL selection

By Jasmine W. Payo

A FORMER NBA BACK-UP CENTER WHO ALSO had a stint as an import in the PBA is being eyed to beef up the young selection set that will see action in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) Champions Cup next month in Jakarta.

Julius Nwosu, who suited up for the San Antonio Spurs and Boston Celtics, is expected to join the 12-man roster bannered by amateur stars Jason Castro, JC Intal and Marvin Cruz.

PBL selection coach Junel Baculi noted that the 6-foot-10 center is no stranger to local cage action.

"Right now we are negotiating with Nwosu, the burly import formerly of Red Bull. Hopefully we can get him," said Baculi.

Nwosu, a Nigerian professional basketball player, first played in the PBA as reinforcement for Purefoods in 2000.

Two years later, he helped Red Bull to the 2002 Commissioner's Cup title.

"I hope he can be with the team early, he needs to jell with our guys," said Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero, who's bankrolling the country's first regional stint in two years.

The Seaba tournament, which is participated mostly by champion club teams, allows each squad to field in two imports.

Baculi kicked off the preparation by inviting 24 PBL players for a three-day tryout that started last Friday at the RFM gym.

Castro, the Silver Cup Most Valuable Player, Intal and Cruz turned up to be the favorites among 15 players who showed up on the first day.

Soguilon rips Del Prado's 200 mark in US track meet

By Marc Anthony Reyes

RALPH WALDY SOGUILON HAD TO RACE IN the United States to get into the Philippine record books.

The country's foremost male sprinter, tuning up for the Southeast Asian Games late this year, clocked 21.39 seconds in the 200-meter dash during the Ben Brown track and field invitational championships recently at the Mt. San Antonio College in California.

While he finished only 7th overall, Soguilon smashed the 21.44 record set by Isidro del Prado in 1984.

It was actually the third time Soguilon had ripped the national mark but his two previous efforts back home were nullified by the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association due to the lack of a wind gauge.

This time, Soguilon's time, recorded on the electronic scoreboard, was confirmed by Patafa's Ben Silva-Netto as the new national record.

"Good news, I finally got the national mark in 200m," said the 23-year-old Soguilon as he happily announced the feat in a text message to his father Waldemar.

Soquilon was in the US with fellow national team member Sheena Atilano.

De Leon kids are future arnis masters

By June Navarro

THE TIME SPENT WITH HER FAther has proven to be a rewarding experience for arnis artist Ana Melissa De Leon.

Applying the tricks she learned from her father, retired police superintendent Manuel M. De Leon, Ana Melissa, 15, swept all six gold medals in her division during the recently concluded Philippine Olympic Festival in Vigan, Ilocos Sur.

De Leon's younger brother, Chris, 14, also had a big catch of three gold medals, two in forms (anyo) and one in full-contact sparring

"We always talk about how to improve their skills and fighting styles," said Manuel De Leon, a former national athlete in karatedo and arnis, as he shared the limelight with his children. "It has been a constant topic whenever the three of us get together."

After making heads turn in the Central-Northern Luzon qualifying of the POF, the De Leons now get a chance to show their stuff in the national championships in October.

In the first edition of the POF last year, Ana Melissa won three golds and a silver, which she hopes to surpass in the national championships to be held at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and Philsports Arena.

"The field will surely be overwhelming so I'm not going to expect anything," said De Leon, whose victories in the POF helped Baguio City capture the overall crown in the CNL qualifying games.

"I'll just train hard, follow the tips of my father and hope they pay off in the national championships," she added.

De Leon has made it a habit to train daily with her father and brother. The elder De Leon said they focus mostly on endurance, mobility and power training while setting aside time for sparring and shadow boxing.

"My kids have the potential. I hope they could make it in the international arena," said father Manuel, who represented the country in the 1974 world karatedo championships held in Manila.

Right now, Ana Melissa is showing signs that she could be where the family patriarch wants her to be.

ANNA MELISSA: Gold-medal sweep. RYAN LIM

Light sentence for Distrito

Rudy draws manslaughter

AT FIRST I THOUGHT THE NEWS ABOUT Rudy Distrito traveled halfway around the world, Las Vegas the starting point, going to Carson City where the former cager's family resides all the way to Alaska where Rino and Rose Salazar are now based.

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

However, a second look at Elmer Yanga's text message clarified some details.

According to Elmer, Rino Salazar had called from Las Vegas at 3 a.m. yesterday to announce the punishment imposed by the judge on Rudy, who was being tried for murder.

"Rudy has been sentenced to a term of six years imprisonment," Elmer texted, which could be considered good news, because he could've gotten a life sentence.

* * *

Later that morning, I had a chance to talk with colleague Ronnie Nathanielsz on radio and he wasted no time relaying the information I had just gotten from Elmer.

"Before anything else, I'd like to announce that the Distrito trial is over. The judge sentenced him from 4 to 12 years. He will be eligible for parole in two years," announced Ronnie, who was happy with the decision because he believes Distrito will be deported to the Philippines even before his eligibility for parole comes around.

"That's exactly what everyone wants to happen and I think it will because Rudy is not an American citizen," he said.

* * *

Ronnie added that his report on the length of the sentence is the correct one and not the one which came from Rino because it came from Rudy's wife, Jocelyn, and his lawyer whom he had talked with in Las Vegas at dawn.

"Everyone was very happy and grateful for the support and assistance Rudy's friends both here in the Philippines and in the United States, had extended, especially in the form of testimonials. The lawyer said the testimonial from past and present senator Robert Jaworski and Jinggoy Estrada, in particular, carried a lot of weight."

The two senators attested to Rudy's good character off the hardcourt, which Ronnie feels is tantamount to committing political suicide.

Rudy played for Ginebra under coach Sonny Jaworski and for Jinggoy's team in the now defunct MBA, San Juan Knights.

* * *

The PBA is about to become very rich, and of course the ballclubs are all excited over the prospect.

No, the windfall is not expected to come from gate receipts, or television revenue, or from sponsorship of any kind.

The voluminous income sans investment will be derived from a tie-up with the Pagcor on game-betting which will be launched soon.

One PBA governor said they expect to generate an annual P200 million revenue from Pagcor while another board member projects between P80 to P300 million.

I believe the income will be divided among the clubs to augment their expenses in maintaining their teams.

* * *

For years, the Pagcor had knocked on the PBA door for a tie-up but the government agency was turned down time and again during the term of commissioner Jun Bernardino. Without the participation or blessing of the PBA, however, Pagcor went through with its plan of online ending betting.

This time, when the Pagcor knocked again, the PBA decided to be an active participant and beneficiary.

* * *

HOOPVINE: Don't expect too many out-of-town games this conference. Provincial promoters are just not too hot on investing in the games considering that the teams have been depleted of superstars whom the fans want to see play...From what I heard, even the game or games at the Ynares Center have been cancelled... Hoopdom's youngest godfather Mikee Romero has secured the blessings of BAP-SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan for the right to represent the country in the Seaba Champions Cup qualifier in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the Southeast Asian Games in Bangkok, Thailand.

By Musong R. Castillo

RUDY DISTRITO, WHO SHONE AS A tough, aggressive player in the Philippine Basketball Association, has been sentenced to a prison term of 4 to 12 years in a Northern Nevada jail for manslaughter resulting from a stabbing incident in November 2004.

Based on information gathered by the Inquirer, judge David Wall found the 49-year-old Distrito guilty of killing Mexican Juan Amaya following a confrontation over alleged Amaya's romantic involvement with Distrito's wife Jocelyn.

Distrito had earlier claimed self defense in the killing of Amaya, whom he accused of being the lover of his 24-year-old wife. The prosecution, meanwhile, sought the capital punishment for the Filipino.

It was learned that Distrito, who had pleaded to a lower sentence last month, became emotional after his sentence was read.

Asked by Wall if he wanted to say something, Distrito apologized to the family of Amaya, and to his family and fans in the Philippines.

DISTRITO

"I apologize to the family of Juan Amaya, to my wife and children," Distrito said. "Please give me one last chance to regain my life," added Distrito, who was also ordered to pay Amaya's family the sum of $10,000 (around P485,00).

Amaya's mother, Maria Gonzales, who was present during the sentencing said:

"For me, my son was good."

The Inquirer source said Distrito got a lift from several respected Filipinos in the community, who had testified that the 5-foot-10 guard known in the PBA as the "Destroyer" was a good person off the court and "was just forced by the circumstances."

He said Abe King and Rino Salazar, former PBA player-friends of Distrito, came to Las Vegas from different parts of the US for the sentencing. King was teary-eyed and Salazar looked stunned when Distrito was led out of the courtroom and back to the county jail.

Another Distrito friend said the verdict was a happy development since Rudy could be available for parole in two years and he could be deported by then because he is not an American citizen.

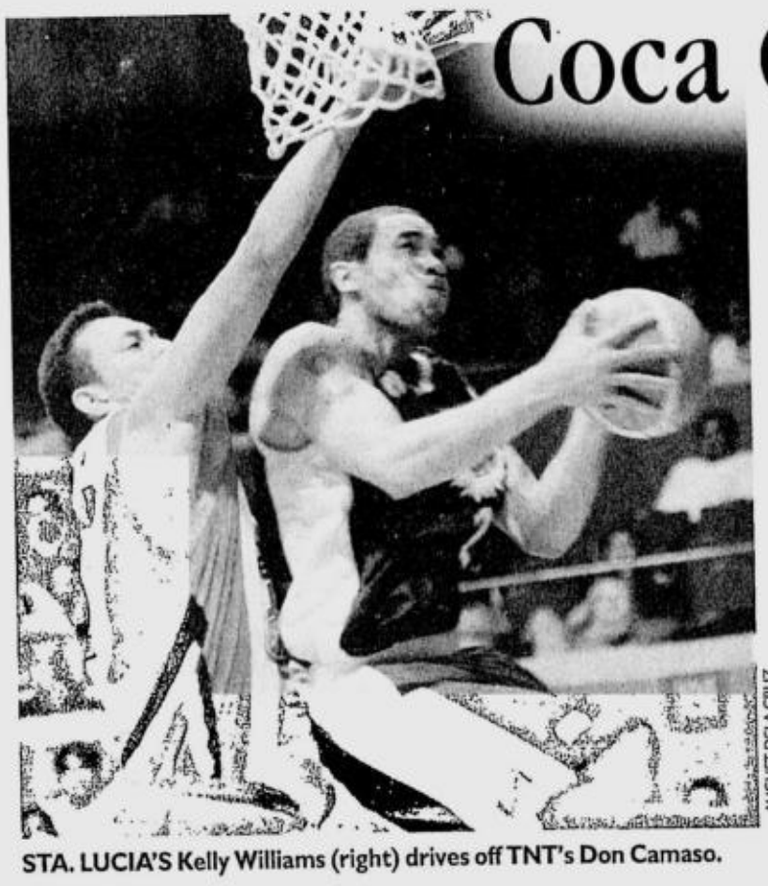
Distrito first gained notice as a University of the East Warrior

HOW HIS TROUBLES BEGAN

Nov. 24, 2004 In Las Vegas to visit his family, Distrito gets into a heated argument with 24-year-old Mexican-American Juan Amaya who ends up being fatally stabbed.
Dec. 4, 2004 After fleeing the scene, Distrito gives himself up to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Los Angeles.
March 22, 2005 Distrito pleads not guilty to the murder charge during his arraignment. He is held at a Las Vegas detention center after being unable to post the $500,000 bail set by the court.
Jan. 31, 2007 Distrito pleads guilty to the lesser offense of manslaughter
Mar. 17, 2007 Distrito is sentenced to 4 to 12 years imprisonment, eligible for parole after after two years.

Maricar Tolosa/Inquirer Research

Coca Cola rips San Miguel



AUGUST DELA CRUZ

STA. LUCIA'S Kelly Williams (right) drives off TNT's Don Camaso.

GAMES TODAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:05 p.m.—Air21 vs Talk 'N Text
6:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs Barangay Ginebra

LANAO DEL NORTE—ANTHONY JOHNSON scored 26 points, grabbed six rebounds and issued six assists to lead Coca-Cola to an 82-64 romp over San Miguel Beer last night in a PBA Fiesta Cup road game at the Mindanao Civic Center here.

The Tigers opened up the second period with an 11-0 run that bloated a precarious opening quarter advantage to double digit leads and sustained their drive to a third victory in four games.

One of the better imports in the lot, Johnson completely had his way as the Beermen again paraded an ineffective reinforcement in Paul McMillan and went down for the third straight time.

McMillan, who planed in two days ago to take the place of Vidal Massiah, didn't have a good debut. While he grabbed 16 rebounds, McMillan finished with just 11 points and a night-high nine errors, five in the first quarter alone.

San Miguel also continued to miss the services of national team draftees Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros and the injured Danny Ildefonso and Lordy Tugade, who incidentally, went under the knife yesterday to repair an injured knee.

Meanwhile, Red Bull shoots for a fourth straight win when it tangles with Barangay Ginebra at 6:30 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum.

Coach Yeng Guiao also has easily the best import in the lot in James Penny, the same man who helped him win this tournament last year.

"He's just doing it all for us and getting everyone in the team involved," Guiao said, after getting 44 points, 14 rebounds, four steals and two blocks in 46 minutes from Penny on Thursday.

Air21 also puts a clean slate on the line when it slugs it out with Talk 'N Text in the 4:05 p.m. game. *Musong R. Castillo*

The scores:

COCA-COLA 82—Johnson 26, Miranda 14, Avenido 10, Arigo 9, Misolas 6, Peek 5, Franco 5, Yeo 4, Antonio 3, Sotto 0.

SAN MIGUEL 64—McMillan 11, Calaguio 11, Peña 9, Cablay 7, Racela 6, Tenorio 6, Wilson 4, Adducul 4, Adriano 4, Espinas 2, Gonzales 0.

Quarters: 16-15, 37-33, 61-56, 82-64

Spring Oil five posts 4th win

TWO-TIME CHAMPION SPRING COOKING Oil repulsed Rusty Lopez's fiery rally in the fourth quarter to hack out a 91-88 victory Friday night in the 2007 PICAA Open basketball tournament at the UM gym.

The Cooking Oil Masters of national shooting champion Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla squandered several double-digit leads but regrouped in time to post their fourth straight win in the eight-team, single round tournament.

Former University of Manila standout Ryan Regalado scored 14 of his team-high 17 points in the second half, including four three-point shots, to pace Spring.

Last year's MVP Welland Munoz and Barbi Barnson also sparkled for Spring with 17 and 15 points, respectively.

The scores:

SPRING 91—Regalado 17, Munoz 17, Barnson 15, Marquez 11, Mallari 11, Bolocon 10, Salud 6, Reyes 4, Tajonera 0, Cuenca 0

RUSTY LOPEZ 88—Codamon 24, De Castro 16, Taligatos 13, Lopez 10, Alcaraz 10, Jimenez 5, Neo 4, Igtos 3, Manabat 3, Villarta 0

Quarters: 22-19, 46-36, 67-55,91-88

Fun Run opens Boxing Week

A FUN RUN DUBBED "BOX & RUN" FOR A CAUSE will open today's celebration of Boxing Week at the Elorde Sports Center in Sucat Road, Parañaque. Starting at 6 a.m. local and international champions, past and present, and guests will converge at the Elorde gym to usher in the week-long commemoration of the 72nd birth anniversary of Gabriel "Flash" Elorde. Heading the fun run are the Laurente brothers. Dennis Laurent is the current Pan Asian Boxing Association (PABA) lightweight champion while Pederito Laurente is another PABA champion. For particulars, call 826-4463 and 825-9385.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Astimegoesby (4), Beautiful Jeada (6), Mary Jane Bomb (3), Power dance (1)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Arriverdi (5), Xtreme Heat (1), Couer D'Honneur (4), EJ Forever (7)
Race 3—Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Gypsy Grey (4), Best Kept Secret (5), Be Beautiful (9), Desiderata (11), Royal Connection (6)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Dancing Polly (3), Armidale (5), Master King (2), Leave No Doubt (1)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Magic Cue (3), Mr. Xavier (8), Fuego (3), Sun and Wind (5)
Race 6—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Reign of Fire (13), Firehouse (14), Master Kenneth (9), Noble Principality (1), Awesome Power (7), Kusang Loob (3)
Race 7—Real Spicy (2), Empire King (1)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Afternoon Delight (5), Que Fresca (9), Court House (10), Sharp and Deadly (3), Kai Maki (4)
Race 9—(Qrt/Tri)—Ultra Rose (2), Sweet Xarah (5), Sand Peebles (7), Red Start Rising (4)
Race 10—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Daddy's Girl (13), Arbiter (11), Kaori Yoks (9), Lovable Trisha (2), Madel Line (12), Celestial (7)
Race 11—(Qrt/Tri)—Dazzling Affair (1), Blue Sheikh (4), Romario (7), Stream Time (6)
Race 12—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Kate Alex (8), She Boom (3), Nino's Incharge (9), Carlito's Way (6), Silver Music (7)
Race 13—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Imperial Manila (1), Hok Kee Hok (9), C Tonet (8), Ocean Cookie (4), Just A Moment (12), Ole! Ole! Ole! (13)

Real Spicy returns

CARMONA, CAVITE—UNTOUCHED FOR more than a year now, superhorse Real Spicy returns to the track today, seeking to extend a 15-race winning streak while adding the Philracom Commissioners' Cup to his growing list of victories.

The outstanding bet to romp off with the P720,000 top prize out of the total kitty of P1.2 million slugs it out with three other chargers he's handily beaten before in the 4:55 p.m. race spread over 1,750 meters.

Also the winner of the last two big races last year—the Gold Cup and the Classic Open - the five-year-old son of Real Quiet out of Spicy Tale has been untouchable lately. Last month, he clocked 1:33 over 1500 meters also at the San Lazaro Leisure Park here. *Musong R. Castillo*

Peña fails to finish

MELBOURNE—A TALL ORDER AWAITS DADO PEÑA IN THE FINAL RACE OF the Formula Three support event of the Melbourne F1 Grand Prix after being forced out of Race 3 Saturday at Albert Park here. The Asian Formula Three star was rear-ended by rookie Daniel Schulz on turn three of the first lap, wrecking his rear wing and taking him out of the race. Schulz was the same driver who took out Pena in the practice session last Thursday, turning in after the Filipino had won the inside lane of a fast right. That put Peña, the only Filipino in the field, in 29th spot on the grid for Sunday's race, leaving him tons of work to do to catch up on the leaders. Formula 3 Australia series co-leader Tim Macrow, winner of Friday's Race 3, led from green to checkered flag, finishing the eight-lap race in 15 minutes and nine tenths of a second for his second win in three races in the support event to the season-opening Formula One Australian Grand Prix. Charlie Hollings of Britain took second place in 15.10.770. Peña had shown he can smartly negotiate his way around the 5.303-kilometer street-based circuit when he boldly zoomed past half of the field in just four laps in an abbreviated Race 2 to finish 14th from 28th spot.

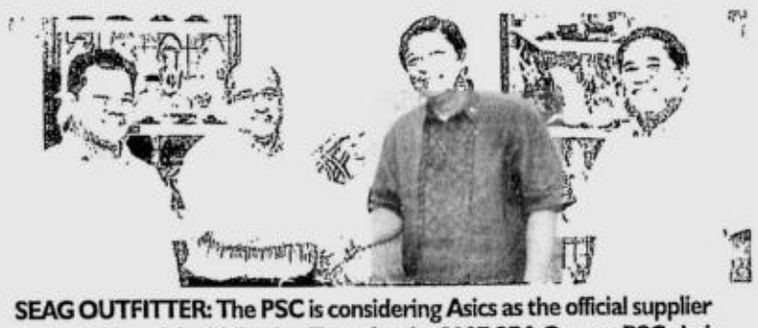
SPORTSWATCH

NCA holds derby in Pasay Tuesday

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE PASAY CITY COCKPIT ON TUESDAY AS THE National Cockers' Association (NCA) holds another much-awaited derby. NCA stalwarts former senator Ramon Revilla, people's champion Manny Pacquiao, Manolo Lopez, Gov. Ito Ynares, Sec. Ronnie Puno, Jun Santiago, Edwin Abella, Boy Jiao, Chair Rudy Albano, Danding Cojuangco, Fiscal Villanueva, brothers Eddie and Boboy Araneta, Patrick Antonio, brothers Raffy and Mauro Prieto, JV Magsaysay, Baby Asistio, Johnny Jalandoni, Charing Magbuhos, Larry Mendoza, Joey Sarasola, Jun Marasigan, Bebot Uy, Edwin Javelosa, Randy Peralta, Jerry Barias, Tony Marfori, Johnny Lagbas, William Go, James Uy and Essie Mallillin will field their aces in the NCA derby. Other top cockers who are joining the derby are Pico Berin, Efren Canlas, Mario Villamor, Jun and Rudy Jingco, Jet Fernando, Madlangbayan brothers, Art Sevilla, Edwin Santos, Bebot Villar, Tony Lasalla, Benjie Lim, Paul Estrellado, Michael Co, Lando Celebre, Edgar Santos, Rey Briones, and Boyet Joson.

UGBA officers inducted March 9

THE INDUCTION OF OFFICERS OF THE NEWLY FORMED UNITED GAMEcock Breeders Associations (UGBA), a union of 16 breeders organizations all over the country, was held March 9 at Sulo Hotel in Quezon City. Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Peping Cojuangco swore into office the following UGBA officials: Rene "Boy" Diaz, president; Glenn Lim, first vice president; Ralph Abella, second vice president; Jonas Lamorena, secretary; Honey Yu, treasurer and Emoy Gorgonia, public relations officer. Meanwhile, the UGBA Heritage Cup 8-cock/bullstag derby starts on Mar. 27 at the Araneta Coliseum. A guaranteed prize of P5 million awaits the winners for an entry fee of P11,000. For inquiries, call 926-7808 or 924-5072 (telefax) or 0920-5851940 (Taz Lunasco).



SEAG OUTFITTER: The PSC is considering Asics as the official supplier and outfitter of the Philippine Team for the 2007 SEA Games. PSC chair William Ramirez shakes hand with Anil Buxaniduring a visit at the SONAK sports facility. With them are Joseph Encabo and Willie Roldan.

Smart backs Bacani summer tennis camp

TELECOMMUNICATION GIANT SMART AND Butch Bacani will embark on a series of projects to uplift Philippine junior tennis and Philippine tennis in general.

Its initial project is the holding of tennis camps this summer with the first camp slated at the outdoor courts of the Philippine Columbian Association in Plaza Dilao, Paco Manila from March 26 to May 1. To be held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, there shall be sessions for beginners from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., intermediates from 10 a.m. to noon, and advanced players from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The teaching staff is composed of former Davis Cupper Mike Mora, Renato Oligo, Boy Frencillo, Danilo Bado, Obet Bayona and Cris Acosta. Registration is free for Smart subscribers and open to children from age 8 to 18.

Butch Bacani trained and worked for the legendary Harry Hopman in the US. He is also a USPTA certified Tennis Teaching Professional I and a former Philippine Davis Cup coach and SEAG coach. He coached the UP Varsity Tennis Team to five straight championships in the UAAP from 1995 to 1999. For details, call PCA at 563-8501 local 132 and ask for Mario Patajo or call 0928-7112133.

Mighty Filter Kings top MBT tilt

THE MIGHTY FILTER KINGS reigned supreme in the MBT Division C by thwarting Nougat, 74-72, Friday at the Metro gym in Mandaluyong.

For the third straight game, Clark Torrente starred for the Mighty Filter Kings as he came through with a huge basket at the homestretch to repel Nougat's determined comeback.

The title was the first for the Caesar Wongchuking-mentored squad in the league after finishing fourth in the Corporate Cup last year.

The 6-foot-4 Torrente tallied 16 points, way below his 26 points average in the team's last two games, but Terrence Tang provided ample support.

Tang logged in 12 points while Marvin Sioco, Cons Ong and the hardworking Sam Gulayan chipped in eight points apiece. Fritz Dy and Donnel Ong provided the intangibles that helped contain Nougat's gunners.

The Mighty Filter Kings have also made their mark in some Fil-Chinese leagues where they won several big titles through the guidance of Wongchuking.

PLAYERS, officials and supporters of Mighty Filter Kings celebrate their first MBT championship.

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Lakers' 7-game fall ends with Kobe's 65

LOS ANGELES—LOS ANGELES SUPERSTAR Kobe Bryant poured in 65 points on Friday as the Lakers ended a seven-game National Basketball Association skid with a 116-111 overtime victory over Portland.

Bryant shot 23-of-39, including 8-of-21 from 3-point range, to post his second-highest career total. Bryant's career best was his 81-point outburst against Toronto last season—second highest in NBA history.

His performance on Friday surpassed his 62-point effort of December 20, 2005 against Dallas, for No. 2 on his personal-best chart. Bryant now has 15 games with 50 or more points, four of them coming this season.

"I felt pretty good. I just wanted to keep on attacking," Bryant said.

More important than the personal points total, Bryant said, was ending the seven-game slide.

It was the longest losing streak of Lakers coach Phil Jackson's illustrious 16-year coaching career.

"Oh, man, I finally get a chance to sleep at night," Bryant said of ending the slide.

Bryant broke a 108-108 tie in overtime with an incredible fadeaway 3-pointer with two Portland defenders in his face from the right corner and Maurice Evans added two free throws for a five-point lead with 28 seconds remaining.

In regulation, Bryant connected on three straight 3-pointers, including the game-tying shot from the arc with 17 seconds left to make it 98-98.

The Trail Blazers had a chance to win it, but Zach Randolph misfired on a 27-footer as the buzzer sounded.

Jackson admitted the team felt the "desperation" of ending the losing streak. He said Bryant's impact began before the game even started.

"Before the tip-off Kobe went around and got in all those guys' ears and talked about playing with some intensity and fervor," Jackson said. *AFP*

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Philadelphia 89, Utah 88; Houston 114, Toronto 100; LA Clippers 102, Charlotte 93; Miami 103, Sacramento 97; New Orleans 92, New York 90; Dallas 106, Boston 101; Detroit 105, Phoenix 83; Golden State 106, Minnesota 86.

KOBE Bryant will finally be able to sleep well at night with the Lakers' seven-game slide over. AP

Pagunsan still in top 20 after 3rd-rd 69

SANYA, CHINA—THAI CHAPCHAI NIRAT suffered a late wobble with three bogeys over the last five holes, but he will still take a five-shot lead into the final day of the TCL Classic after shooting a third round 68 on Saturday.

The 23-year-old flirted with danger all day and spent a lot of time in the rough and sand but after a course record 11-under 61 and a 66 in his first two rounds, he still had plenty of breathing room with a 21-under 195 total.

A chip-in for an eagle at the 16th helped Miles Tunnicliff to a 65 for a share of second with Japan's Taichi Teshima, who shot a flawless 66 to join the Briton on 16-under 200 for the European and Asian Tour event.

Argentine European Tour rookie Rafael Echenique's 68 left him alone in fourth at 201, a shot ahead of Taiwan's experienced Lu Wen-teh, who also shot four-under.

Juvic Pagunsan, the 2006 Rookie of the Year from the Philippines, shot a 69 after successive 68s to stay in a six-way tie for 18th place at 205.

Pagunsan had an eagle, two birdies and a bogey for a 33 on the front nine but could only par the rest of the way for his three-under card for the day.

Anyone hoping for Chapchai to blow up over the weekend were left waiting as he continued to pick up birdies over the front nine. *Reuters*

Winthrop, UNLV advance

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON—NEW ZEALAND center Craig Bradshaw scored 24 points and Torrell Martin added 20 and a career-high 11 rebounds as Winthrop University beat the Notre Dame 74-64 Friday in the first round of the US college basketball championship tournament.

Winthrop, which had been 0-6 in previous tournament appearances, blew all of its 20-point lead in the second half before surging in the final 2 minutes to end Notre Dame's first NCAA appearance since 2003.

Aaron Brooks scored 18 points and the third-seeded Oregon Ducks nipped Miami (Ohio), 58-56 and moved into the second round for the first time since 2002.

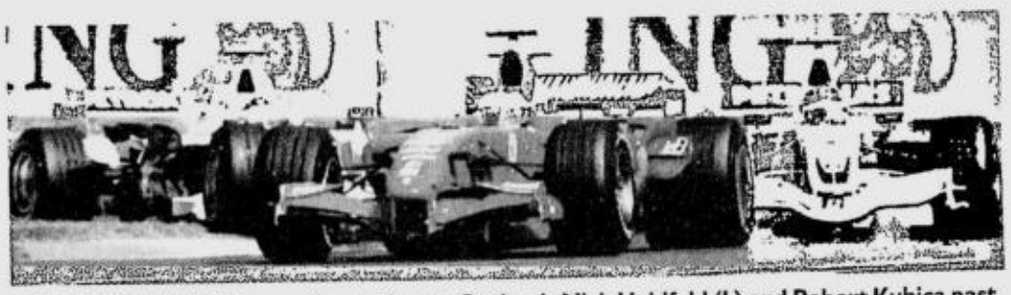
The pesky RedHawks (18-15) had a chance to tie it late, but Michael Bramos' fallaway 3-point attempt bounced off the front of the rim.

In Chicago, Michael Umeh and Wendell White had 16 points apiece and UNLV won an NCAA tournament game for the first time in 16 years by edging Georgia Tech, 67-63.

The last time the Runnin' Rebels won was under Jerry Tarkanian, who led them to the 1991 Final Four. Now under coach Lon Kruger, UNLV (29-6) won its eighth in a row.

In Chicago, Wisconsin overcame an 18-point deficit to advance past the 15th-seeded Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Islanders, 76-63.

Kammron Taylor, scoreless at the break, finished with 24 points for the Badgers (30-5). Wisconsin also clamped down its defense on the Islanders, who began playing basketball in the 1999-2000 season. AP



FERRARI'S Kimi Raikkonen (center) tows Sauber's Nick Heidfeld (L) and Robert Kubica past a curb during the qualifying session. REUTERS

Kimi takes Aussie GP pole

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—KIMI RAIKKONEN took pole position Saturday for Sunday's season-opening Australian Grand Prix, while Formula One champion Fernando Alonso starts his title defense beside him at the front of the grid.

It was Raikkonen's 12th career pole, but his first in a Ferrari. Formerly of McLaren, the Finn joined Ferrari to replace seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher, who retired after finishing second on the drivers standings last year.

Raikkonen completed the 5.303-kilometer (3.295-mile) Albert Park circuit with a time of 1 minute, 26.072 seconds.

His last pole position was at the Italian GP in September, but he was winless in 2006 after winning seven races in 2005 for McLaren.

Now he will have a McLaren as a rival beside him on the front row.

Alonso, sporting the No. 1 on his car once again, but with his new McLaren race car, was second with 1:26.493.

Raikkonen thinks his car can do better over the 58 laps in Sunday's race.

"If all goes the way it should then we have a good chance, but it will be important to pick up as many points as possible," Raikkonen said.

"I think our car is more competitive in race trim than a single lap," he added. "We are more confident for the race than for qualifying."

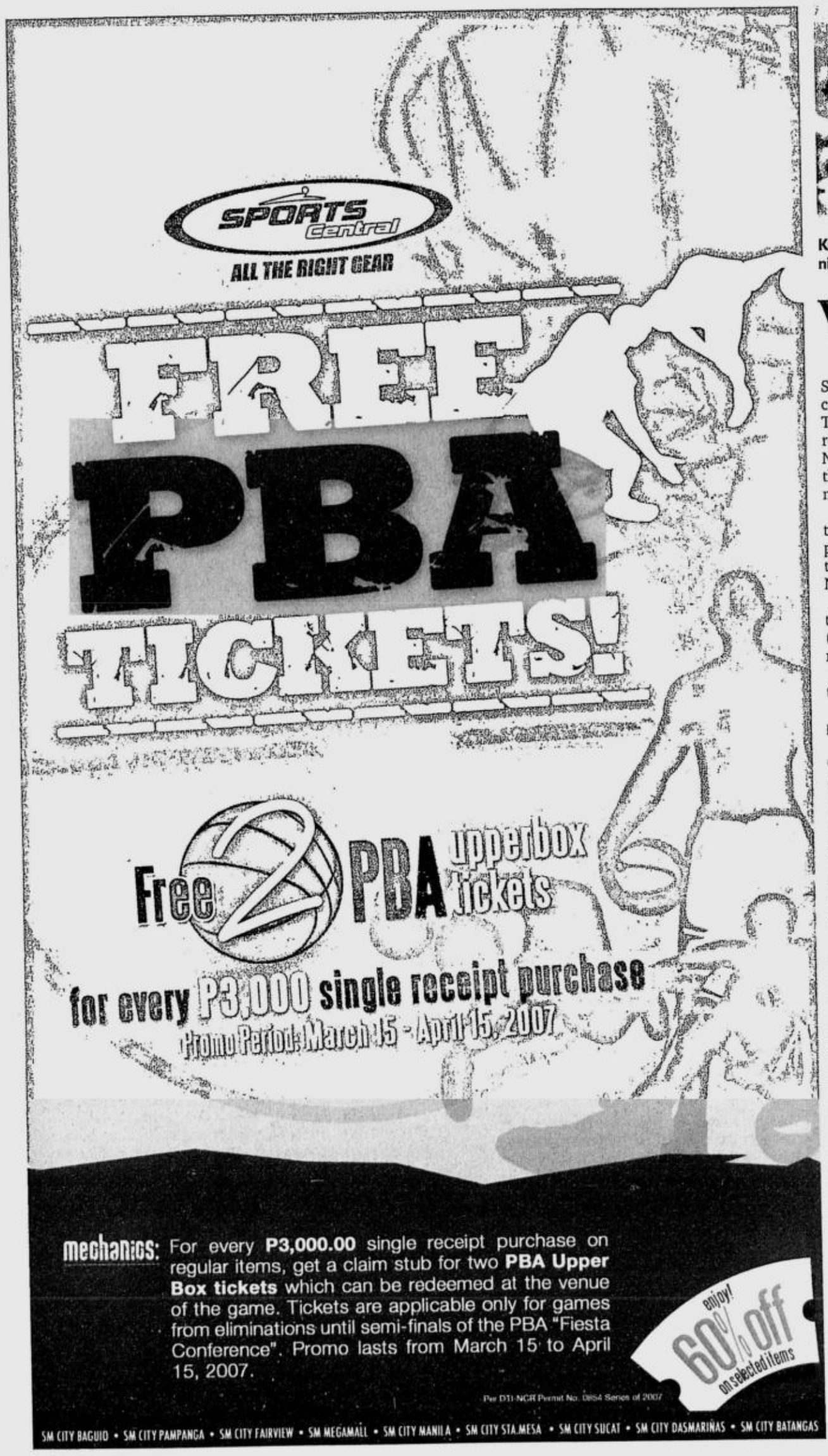
Raikkonen's teammate Felipe Massa did not fare so well and will start from 16th on the grid after a faulty gearbox prevented him from completing the second qualifying session.

"We found a good setup for the car, but it wasn't a good result for the team," said Raikkonen.

Alonso won last year's race here in a Renault when Melbourne was the third race of the season.

"There is still a slight gap to Ferrari, but the improvements that have been made since the Bahrain test are fantastic," said Alonso, who is eager for the race.

"For sure it will be very interesting. We were very competitive all weekend," Alonso said. He led the first practice session on Friday. *AP*



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Sunday Biz

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

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Cebu's *fashion accessory makers* fight slowdown

Companies want to ensure jobs of 250,000

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—Most fashion accessories exporters in Cebu have one thing in common—they possess the gung-ho attitude that has enabled Cebu entrepreneurs to weather economic storms. The fashion accessory industry started in the 1960s in Cebu, then abundant in seashells, according to a study funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (Cida) Pearl2 project.

In the mid-70s, "puka" shells became a hit in the global market, encouraging the emergence of small companies taking advantage of the huge demand. The industry now use a variety of raw materials such as wood, horn, coconut shell and fibers like abaca, raffia, *buri* and *pandan*. The products also expanded from producing only necklaces and bracelets to include bags, hair accessories, earrings, rings and brooches.

Indeed, the industry has come a long way as the Cebu-based exporters now supply the fashion accessory requirements of major department stores such as Marks and Spencer, DeLange, Debenhams, Target, Nordstrom, Top Shop and JC Penney, among others. It also enjoyed record sales in 2005, with exports reaching $63 million.

But sales this year have gone down as the fashion accessory industry faces stiff competition from China and a slowdown in some of their markets. A few had stopped operations while most are on a slow down mode. However, industry leaders still see opportunities for growth.

"We view these concerns as challenges. I am excited over the developments," says Ma. Rosario B. Soberano, president of Cebu Fashion Accessories Manufacturers and Exporters Foundation (Fame).

Cebu Fame vice president

CEBU'S/ B2

HARAJUKU Princess: Japanese-inspired necklace made with resin, crocheted suede, Swarovski crystals and decoupage balls.

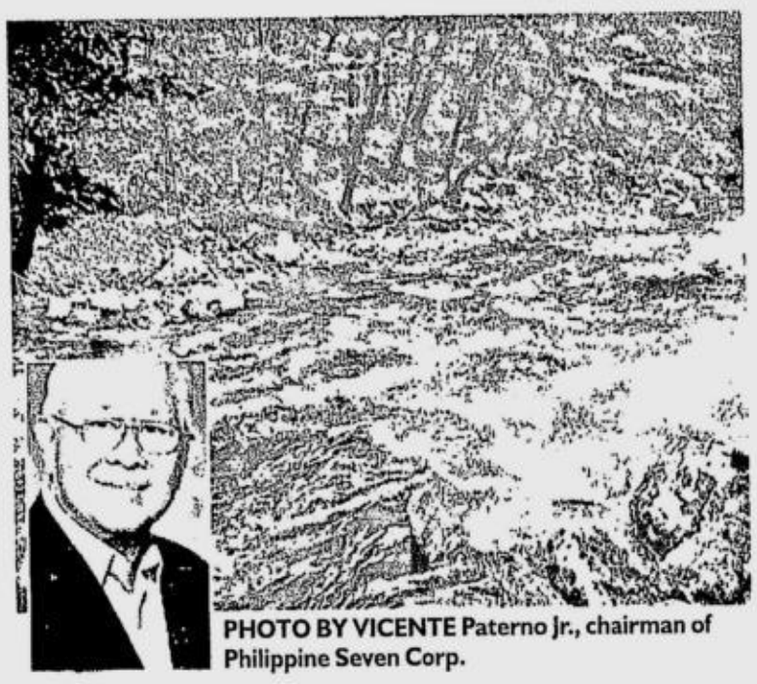


PHOTO BY VICENTE Paterno Jr., chairman of Philippine Seven Corp.

CEOs behind the lens

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN and excel at a new skill. Just take a look at 82-year-old former Senator and Philippine Seven Corp. chair Vicente Paterno.

Paterno tells SundayBiz that he has taken up photography and the hobby has opened up a whole new world for him.

"Photography has widened my perspective. It helps me to discover the beauty in people, places and things that I did not notice before," Paterno says.

He says he likes taking photographs of nature and all its glory, and he hones his craft through practice and by getting advice from the members of the Camera Club of the Philippines.

Paterno is the oldest applicant for membership to the CCP, the country's oldest photography club, and he is having a ball.

The applicants are supposed to take care of the logistics during meetings of the club setup in 1928, such as the setup of tables, chairs, the projector and the display of the photographs.

Paterno says it's a good thing that he's over 80 years old.

"Because I'm old, I get the easiest jobs," Paterno says with a smile.

Not that Paterno is complaining.

As he says, photography gives him a sense of accomplishment quite different from what he gets in the corporate and government worlds.

It's a feeling shared by the other top executives of some of the country's largest corporations who are also active members of the CCP.

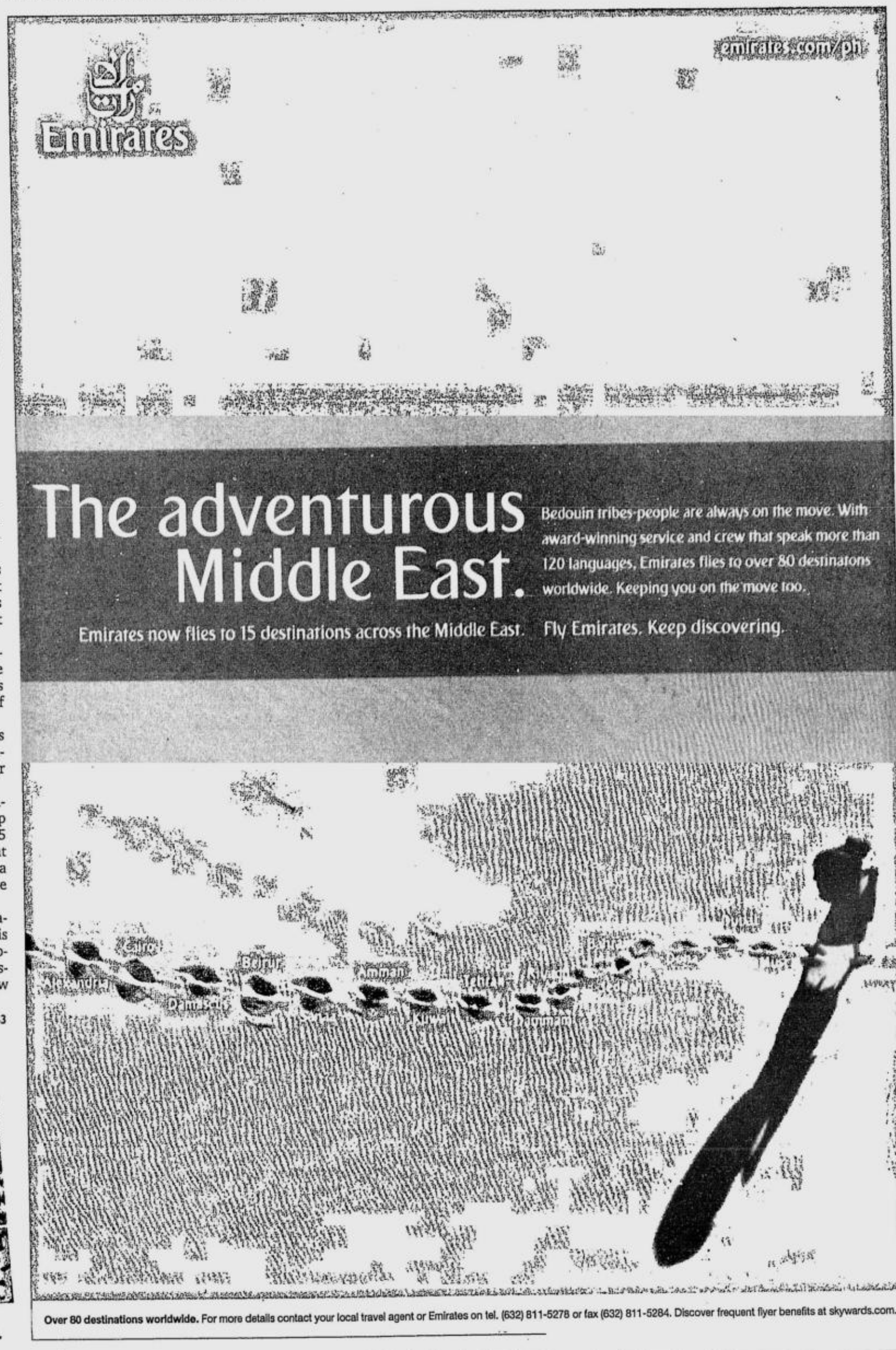
Bern Siy, CEO of Roasters Philippines Inc., says photography allows her to bring out her artistic side.

"I've been the family photographer ever since, but I just took up my first formal class about 15 years ago," Siy says, "now that I'm with the CCP, I am shooting a lot more and I learn from the members."

She says she enjoys photography because through it, she is able to capture a feeling, an emotion for posterity, be it an expression on a person's face, or how patterns form in nature.

CEOs/ B3

BY BERN Siy, president/CEO of Roasters Phils.



Cebu's fashion accessory makers...

From page B1

for external affairs Gil Zaire C. Carungay also takes the difficulties in stride. "What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger," Carungay says. But he urged companies to find ways to cut down costs to remain competitive.

Production inputs

Soberano also recognizes the need for action on the constraints besetting the industry. While the peso has strengthened, the price of the imported components the industry uses remains high, she says.

Cebu Fame past president Janet Chua says local suppliers still sell the imported components at the same price although the peso has strengthened and the cost of the raw material for these components have gone down.

Chua, who owns Cypria International Inc., suggests that the industry source its raw material requirement somewhere else to get a more reasonable price.

It's not hopeless though for the country's fashion accessory industry. While China emerged as a preferred fashion accessory supplier, Carungay notes that it is losing its advantage as far as labor cost is concerned.

"The cost of labor in the Philippines is not much higher than that of China, where labor has gone up by as much as 60 percent and is projected to increase further," he adds.

If the industry could improve the supply chain and bring down the cost of components, it could compete with China, says Carungay.

He suggests that the industry should work at attracting the suppliers to set up their manufacturing facility here to bring down the cost.

High price

In the meantime, the price remains a major constraint for the industry. Soberano recalls that one prospective buyer asked her company to develop and design a product sample but they did not receive any order for this product. Instead, she saw the product displayed at a store abroad, which she believed was produced in China. A product that costs $1.50 in China would cost at the minimum $5 in the Philippines, Carungay says.

"What we make here, China could make it cheaper. If we could give the buyers what they need at the right price, then they would not go to China," Soberano says. She says most buyers prefer that the costume jewelry be priced at a maximum of $3.

Carungay is approaching the problem of price by coming up with two types of products to serve the high-end and the low-end markets. While his family's company Avatar Accessories Inc. had been serving the high-end market over the years, Carungay decided to come up with product lines that target the low-end market. "About 50 percent of total sales now comes from the low-end market," he points out.

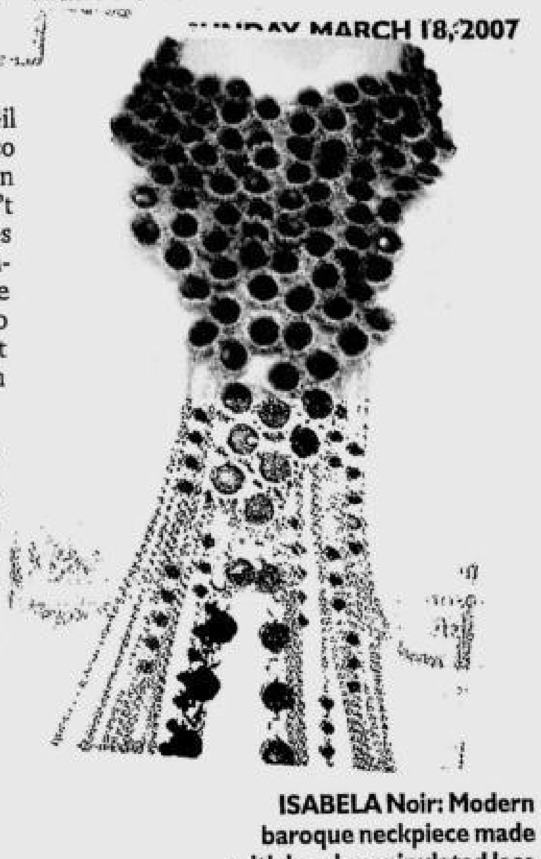
Carungay, who has been gaining recognition in international exhibitions for his designs, also plans to develop the company brand for their high-end products.

But Chua says not all fashion accessory manufacturers could brand their products like Avatar since their products could be copied easily by China. She cites as an example a seed available locally and used as a component in locally made accessories that caught the market's fancy but China came up with their own version—one made of plastic at lesser cost.

Optimism

Soberano still expressed optimism over the industry's prospects. She says the country still has comparative advantage in terms of design, the use of indigenous materials and relationship with the buyers. "We are still ahead in terms of design," she says.

Cebu Fame executive director Noemi Avanceña said the country is known for its spring-summer line, which is made from natural materials such as wood, coconut and seashell. "At the same time, we have the creativity, which is innate in the Filipinos. Even if



ISABELA Noir: Modern baroque neckpiece made with hand-manipulated lace chain around Swarovski crystals.

China is a major player, we still have the window of opportunity because the fashion industry trends changes every six months," Avanceña says.

The Cida Pearl2 state of the sector report also noted the need to address the different areas in the value chain, such as component sourcing, operations, marketing and sales, outbound logistics and customer care.

The report recommended the establishment of a formal structure at the front end of the supply chain covering the gatherers of indigenous raw materials and the sourcing agents.

It also suggested that firms could consolidate their requirements for imported raw materials to get a better price.

Aside from training for the industry workers and sub-contractors, the report also cited the need for the industry players to sustain its presence in international trade fairs and to use innovative marketing tools.

Trade fairs

To keep up with the competition, fashion accessory exporters have to continue participating in trade fairs, noted Soberano, whose company ABS Export International Inc. joins an average of 12 trade fairs every year. The other major companies join about seven trade fairs annually.

Carungay, however, noted that companies have to spend between P500,000 and P1 million to join international trade fairs. Since the bulk of the fashion accessory exporters belong to the micro category, most of them could not afford to join trade fairs.

Unfortunately, the Philippine government has not been able to help in this area. Instead, the industry gets fair trade participation subsidies from international agencies such as the Cida Pearl2.

Avanceña says the Pearl2 has provided assistance for not only in trade fair participation but also in trade promotion, product development, short-term training in production processes and information on emerging fashion trends. "The companies have to know the future trends to be able to respond to the market needs," she says.

Social responsibility

What keeps the Cebu-based companies going is the thought that giving up would mean thousands would lose their means of livelihood. The industry employs 250,000 direct and indirect workers, aside from supporting downstream industries. "We have the social responsibility of providing the means of living to our workers," says Soberano.

Carungay agrees. "My mom always tells me to take care of myself because many depend on the company for livelihood," he says.

Carungay, who serves as Avatar's managing director and in-house designer, has brought honors to the company and to the industry in general.

Avatar is the first and only Asian firm to receive thrice, in 2004, 2005 and 2006, the Etoiles de Mode Award at the Bijorhca fair in Paris. Avatar's excellent designs and innovative use of materials have continued to impress the Etoiles jury.

While he complains about the problems the industry faces, he refuses to give up. Instead, he considers the softening of the global market as a time for stepping back, taking stock of the business and determining future directions.

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ALICIA
AB_ISA063 2-STRY RSDL BLDG.
L.A. 16,225 00sqm. F.A. 1,640 50sqm.
Along National Highway, Poblacion, ALICIA
(infront of new rice mill)
Min. Bid Price: P 15,3000,099

AB_ISA064 RSDL HOUSE w/ WRHSE
L.A. 1,155 00sqm. F.A. 720.70sqm.
Poblacion, ALICIA
(reside MARI's buying station)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,080,099

BENITO SOLIVEN
AB_ISA065 9 VACANT RSDL LOTS
L.A. 8,150 00sqm.
Poblacion, BENITO SOLIVEN
(beside health center)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,304,099

CABAGAN
AB_ISA066 2 STRY RSDL BLDG & WAREHOUSE
L.A. 6,294 00sqm. F.A. 385 00sqm
Along Barrio Road, Bo. Cubag,
Min. Bid Price. P 1,700,099

CABATUAN
AB_ISA67 RSDL / IND'L LOT w/ SOLAR DRYER WAREHOUSE & MINI WAREHOUSE
L.A. 2,023sqm. F.A.736sqm.
Along Provincial Rd., Bo. Sampaloc, CABATUAN
(infront mini buying station & rice mill)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,275,099

AB_ISA068 RSDL/COMM'L LOT w/ 2-STRY RSDL BLDG.& 2 WAREHOUSES
L.A. 374sqm. F.A. 310.75sqm.
Along Municipal Rd cor Cortez St., Poblacion, CABATUAN
Min. Bid Price: P 1,700,099

CORDON
AB_ISA070 RSDL LOT
L.A. 825.00sqm.
National Road, Barrio Taringsing, CORDON (near Iglesia Ni Cristo Church)
Min. Bid Price: P 960,099

AB_ISA072 COMM'L LOT w/ 2 DEPRECIATED PIGGERIES
L.A. 5,086sqm. F.A. 548 sqm
Barrio Gayonggayong, CORDON
(back of Gayong-gayong High School)
Min. Bid Price: P 595,099

ECHAGUE
AB_ISA073 RSDL / IND'L LOT w/ RSDL BLDG
L.A. 50,000sqm.
Prov'l Road, Bo. Capitan, ECHAGUE
(near Sarangaya Aloha Farm)
Min. Bid Price. P 4,000,099

ILAGAN
AB_ISA074 RESORT w/3 SWIMMING POOLS
L.A. 10,000sqm. F.A. 545sqm.
Alibagu, ILAGAN (FORMERLY CRYSTAL RESORT)
(infront of Green Heights Subd.)
Min. Bid Price. P 3,200,099

AB_ISA075 RAWLAND
L.A. 24,962 00sqm.
Barrio San Felipe, ILAGAN
(near Hill Crest Subd.)
Min. Bid Price: P 12,000,099

AB_ISA076 RSDL/COMM'L LOT
L.A. 1,190 00sqm.
San Vicente, ILAGAN
(formerly Victory Bus station)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,500,099

AB_ISA077 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ RSDL BLDG
L.A. 548 00sqm. F.A. 387.00sqm.
National Road, Barrio Guinatan, ILAGAN (near Coca-Cola Plant)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,160,099

AB_ISA078 RSDL LOT
L.A. 573.00sqm.
Bo. Baculod, ILAGAN
(near Chinese School)
Min. Bid Price: P 200,099

AB_ISA079 VACANT LOT
L.A. 1,136 00sqm.
Brgy. Road Alibagu, ILAGAN
(near Provincial Capitol)
Min. Bid Price: 648,099

KALINGA APAYAO
AB_ISA115 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 10,352sqm. F.A. 347sqm.
Barrio Laya, Tabuk
Min. Bid Price P 4,875,099

NAGUILIAN
AB_ISA069 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ 3 STRY RSDL BLDG WAREHOUSE & EXTENSION
L.A. 13,286sqm. F.A. 748 50sqm.
Along National Road.NAGUILIAN
(near Ramos Funeral Homes)
Min. Bid Price: P 11,600,099

ROXAS
AB_ISA080 RSDL LOT
L.A. 676.00sqm.
National Highway cor. Brgy. Road Barrio San Rafael, ROXAS
Min. Bid Price: P 585,099

AB_ISA081 COMM'L/IND'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE & COMM'L STALL
L.A. 1,010 00sqm. F.A. 77 sqm.
Along National highway cor Bo. Rd. Barrio Bantug, ROXAS
Min. Bid Price: P5,200,099

AB_ISA082 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ 2-STRY BLDG.
L.A. 6,738sqm. F.A. 2,387 50sqm.
Castillo Street, Barrio Bantug.
Min. Bid Price: P 9,600,099

AB_ISA083 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 1,356 00sqm.
National Highway, Bo. San Antonio, ROXAS
Min. Bid Price: P 960,099

AB_ISA084 RSDL LOT w/ WRHSE
L.A. 299.00sqm. F.A. 110.00sqm
Gen. Luna St., Barrio Vira, ROXAS
Min. Bid Price: P 960,099

SAN ISIDRO
AB_ISA085 IND'L LOT w/ OFFICE & WAREHOUSE
L.A. 2,500sqm. F.A. 277sqm.
Barrio Rizal East, SAN ISIDRO
(infront Tumanao residential house town proper)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,125,099

AB_ISA086 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 2,613sqm.
Along Provincial Road, Bo. Quezon, SAN ISIDRO
(back of Quezon Elem. School)
Min. Bid Price: P 750,099

SANTIAGO CITY
AB_ISA087 RSDL LOT w/ BLDG w/ TERRACE
L.A 286sqm. F.A. 140 sqm.
Recto Ave., Victory Norte
Min. Bid Price: P 1,360,099

AB_ISA088 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,069 00sqm.
Along Calle Mapa & Calle Torres, Plaridel, SANTIAGO CITY
(near Chinese school)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,650,099

AB_ISA090 INDUSTRIAL LOT
L.A. 1,034 00sqm.
Claro M. Recto St., SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 2,250,099

AB_ISA091 RSDL LOT w/ IMPROVEMENT
L.A. 937 00sqm
National Highway, Bo. Divisoria, SANTIAGO CITY (infront Divisoria Elem. School)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,350,099

AB_ISA092 RSDL LOT w/ RSDL BLDG. & STORE
L.A. 891.00sqm F.A. 55.00sqm.
Calle Palogan cor Vigilia St., BO. Divisoria, SANTIAGO CITY
(infront Divisoria Elem. School)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,350,099

AB_ISA093 RSDL LOT
L.A. 748 00sqm.
Along Bo. Road, San Andres, SANTIAGO CITY
(beside Santiago City Hall)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,070,099

AB_ISA094 RSDL/COMM'L LOT w/ BLDG
L.A. 1,870sqm. F.A. 78 26sqm.
National Highway, Bo. Mabini, SANTIAGO CITY (beside T-rak Petroleum gas station)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,050,099

AB_ISA096 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 1,163 00sqm.
Gulao St., Rizal, SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 800,099

AB_ISA097 RSDL LOT w/ OFFICE & 4 RSDL HOUSES
L.A. 2,455.00sqm. F.A. 24.00sqm
Galicia St. & Dadural St., SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 1,147,599

AB_ISA098 4 ADJACENT VACANT LOTS
L.A. 12,908.00sqm.
Interior Dadural St., Bo Rizal, SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,099

AB_ISA099 COMM'L LOTS w/ 4 STRY RSDL /COMM'L BLDG
L.A. 233.00sqm. F.A. 493 00sqm.
Along National Rd. & Lumidao St., Villasis SANTIAGO CITY
(infront of Ala Moana Bldg.)
Min. Bid Price: P 6,800,099

AB_ISA100 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ RSDL HOUSE & WAREHOUSE
L.A. 837 00sqm F.A. 303.75sqm.
Bo. Plaridel, SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 960,099

AB_ISA101 RSDL LOT w/ BLDG & GARAGE
L.A. 232.00sqm F.A. 136.17sqm
Calle Lumidao, Bo. Villasis, SANTIAGO CITY
(near Smart Karaoke Bar & Rest.)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,360,099

AB_ISA102 RSDL/COMM'L/ IND'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 2,000.00sqm.
Along Barrio Baluarte, SANTIAGO CITY
(near Dizon Grains & Rice Mill)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,115,099

AB_ISA103 RSDL LOT w/ BLDG
L.A. 21,766 00sqm.
Along National Highway, Batal, SANTIAGO CITY
(near Ogie's Lodge)
Min. Bid Price: P 5,100,099

AB_ISA106 COMML LOTS
L.A. 534.00sqm.
Poblacion, SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 5,100,099

AB_ISA107 RSDL LOT w/ 2-STRY BLDG
L.A. 1,486 00sqm.
Roque St., Bo Centro West, SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 4,800,099

AB_ISA161 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 494.00sqm.
Roque cor Camacam St., Centro West, SANTIAGO CITY
(near Bok's machine shop)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,600,099

AB_ISA108 RSDL/COMM'L LOT w/ COMM'L BLDG
L.A. 618sqm. F.A. 80sqm.
Along Camacam St., SANTIAGO CITY
(infront of PNP Headquaters)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,400,099

AB_ISA109 2 ADJ'T RSDL LOTS w/ WAREHOUSE & RSDL BLDG
L.A. 5,204.00sqm.
Along Aguinaldo St. Bo. Rosario, SANTIAGO CITY
(beside Ros Rice Mill)
Min. Bid Price: P 6,635,199

AB_ISA110 RSDL LOT w/ 2 BLDG
L.A. 323.00sqm. F.A. 210.50sqm.
Roxas Ave., Bo Rosario, SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 1,440,099

AB_ISA111 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ 2 STRY BLDG
L.A. 273 00sqm. F.A. 242.25sqm
Recto Ave., Victory Norte, SANTIAGO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 1,020,099

TUMAUINI
AB_ISA112 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 300 00sqm. F.A. 139.50sqm.
Along National Highway, Bo Lanna, TUMAUINI
Min. Bid Price: P 400,099

AB_ISA113 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE & OFFICE
L.A. 9,995sqm. F.A. 642 50sqm
Along National Road, Bo Lanna, TUMAUINI
Min. Bid Price: P 7,225,099

AB_ISA114 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ RSDL HOUSE WAREHOUSE, STORE & OFFICE
L.A. 652 00sqm. F.A. 234.00sqm.
Along National Rd., Bo. San Mateo, TUMAUINI
Min. Bid Price: P 1 600,099

NUEVA ECIJA Text 09156002733

AB_NE116 RSDL LOT w/ 2-STRY STRUCTURE
L.A. 193 00sqm F.A. 386.00sqm.
Magsaysay District, CABANATUAN CITY
(near Wesleyan University)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,060,099

AB_NE117 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 240.00sqm
Kapitan Pepe Subd. II CABANATUAN CITY
(near old City Hall of Cabanatuan)
Min. Bid Price: P 405,099

AB_NE118 IND'L/AGRO LAND
L.A. 40,000 00sqm.
Barrio Macatbong, CABANATUAN CITY
(near Hunter Valley Resort)
Min. Bid Price: P 3,400,099

AB_NE119 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ BLDG & WAREHOUSE
L.A. 999sqm. F.A. 712.75sqm.
Sanciangco St., CABANATUAN CITY
(near McDonalds Sanciangco)
Min. Bid Price: P 3,400,099

AB_NE120 RSDL LOT
L.A. 10,000 sqm
Daan Sarile & Carosilisan Rd. Bo Valde Fuente, CABANATUAN CITY
(near Maranatha School)
Min Bid Price: P 7,200,099

AB_NE162 RSDL COMM'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE & GARAGE
L.A. 526 sqm.
Gen. Luna, CABANATUAN CITY
Min Bid Price: P 4,320,099

AB_NE122 RSDL/ IND'L LOT w/ WRHSE, OFFICE & SOLAR DRIER
L.A. 5,252 sqm F.A 530 75 sqm
Sto. Tomas, PENARANDA
(near Plaza Peñaranda)
Min Bid Price: P 5,400 099

AB_NE123 RSDL LOT w/ 1 STRY RSDL BLDG w/ COMM'L STALL
L.A.219 sqm
Sto. Toma, PENARANDA
(near Plaza Peñaranda)
Min Bid Price: P 170,099

AB_NE124 RSDL LOT w/ 1-STRY RSDL BLDG w/ COMM'L STALL
L.A. 2,048 sqm F.A. 214.25 sqm
Bo. Sta. Clara, QUEZON
Min Bid Price: P 960,099

AB_NE125 RSDL / IND'L LOT w/ 1 STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 10,001 sqm F.A. 498 4 sqm
Bo Julo & Sto. Cristo, SAN ANTONIO
(near Town proper of San Antonio)
Min Bid Price: P 2,550,099

AB_NE126 RSDL LOT w/ 1 STRY & 3 STRY RSDL HOUSES, 3 PIG PENS &WAREHOUSE
L.A.4,556 sqm F.A.1,272 sqm
Calaba, SAN ISIDRO
(near San Roque Church)
Min Bid Price: P 3,600,099

AB_NE128 RSDL LOT w/ 1 STRY BLDG w/ BASEMENT
L.A. 1,044 sqm
Sto Rosario, STO. DOMINGO
(near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price: P 1,350,099

AB_NE129 RSDL LOT
L.A. 361 sqm.
Sto. Rosario, STO. DOMINGO
(near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price P 146 299

AB_NE130 RSDL LOT
L.A. 361 sqm.
Sto Rosario, STO DOMINGO
(near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price: P 146,299

AB_NE131 RSDL LOT w/ POUTRY HOUSE
L.A. 5,960 sqm
BARRIO LA TORRE
(near La Torre Elem. School)
Min Bid Price: P 990,099

AB_NE132 RSDL LOT
L.A.1,652 sqm
Bo San Pascual,TALAVERA
(near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price: P 900,099

AB_NE133 RSDL/ COMM'L LOT w/ 2-STRY RSDL BLDG & STOCK HOUSE
L.A 462 59 sqm F.A. 252 sqm
Bo San Pascual, TALAVERA
(near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price: P 1,080,099

AB_NE134 RSDL LOT w/ 1 STRY BLDG &WAREHOUSE
L.A. 245 sqm.
Bo San Pascual, TALAVERA
(near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price: P 315,099

AB_NE135 RSDL / IND'L LOT w/ 1 STRY RSDL HOUSE
Bo San Pascual, TALAVERA
(near Sicsican market)

Lot Area	Min. Bid Price
5,349sqm	P 2,000,099
199sqm	P 2,000 099

CAGAYAN Text 09195829178

AB_CAG056 RSDL/ IND'L LOT
L.A. 11,403 00 sqm.
Barrio Nagalisan, SOLANA
(beside Mangalisan Elem. School)
Min. Bid Price. P 2,250,099

AB_CAG057 IND'L LOT/ WRHSE
L.A. 21,152 00sqm F.A. 1,200sqm
Along National Highway, Barrio Lingu, SOLANA
(beside Shell Gas station)
Min. Bid Price: P 9,000,099

AB_CAG058 2 STRY RSDL HOUSE w/ TERRACE
L.A. 752.00sqm.
Bassig St., TUGUEGARAO CITY
(near Tuguegarao Domestic Airport)
Min. Bid Price. P 1,530,099

AB_CAG059 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 387.00sqm. F.A. 129 sqm.
Grape St., TUGUEGARAO CITY
(near Tuguegarao Domestic Airport)
Min Bid Price P 630 099

AB_CAG060 RSDL LOT w/ RSDL BLDG.
L.A. 2,030.00sqm. F.A 128.00sqm
Along National Highway, Bo. Ruyu TUGUEGARAO CITY
(beside Victory liner terminal)
Min. Bid Price P 9,760,099

TARLAC Text 09163086112

AB_TAR148 RSDL LOT w/ 2-STRY FACTORY WRHSE & BUNGALOW
L.A. 729 sqm. F.A 64 sqm.
Edwards St. San Sebastian Vil. Bo San Roque, SAN RAFAEL
Min Bid Price. P 2,136,299

AB_TAR151 RSDL LOT w/ WAREHOUSE w/ EXTENSION
L.A. 1,400 sqm F.A. 256 sqm
Barrio Tibag, TARLAC CITY
(front Zaraga Subd.)
Min Bid Price P 520 099

AB_TAR152 AGRICULTURAL LOT
L.A. 13,530 sqm
Barrio Palacpac, VICTORIA
Min Bid Price: P 1,217,799

METRO MANILA

ANGONO, RIZAL
AB_RZL038 IND'L LOT
L.A. 5,046 sqm.
DON MARIANO SANTOS AVE., Angono (near Aveemar Subd.)
Min Bid Price: P 5,525,099

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL
AB_RZL039 RSDL LOT W/ 4-SNGL STRY COMM'L STALL
L.A. 320 sqm. F.A. 240 sqm.
Along Marcos Highway, Agatha St., MARISS VILLAGE II, Bo. Cupang Antipolo City
Min Bid Price. P 4,050,099

AB_RZL040 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,001 sqm.
Mt. Aetna St., FAIRMONT HILL SUBD., Antipolo City
(near Beverly Hills Subd.)
Min Bid Price: P 2,880,099

AB_RZL041 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 404 sqm F.A. 267.85 sqm.
Aster St., LA COLINA SUBD.
Min Bid Price: P 2,040,099

AB_RZL042 RSDL LOT w/ SNGL STRY RSDL BLDG,w/BASEMENT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 191 sqm.
Camia St., LOPEZVILLE SUBD., Mayamot(near Masinag Market)
Min Bid Price. P 1,530,099

AB_RZL043 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,840 sqm.
Victoria Valley Boulevard, VALLEY GOLF SUBD.
Bo Mayamot, Antipolo City
Min Bid Price: P 6,256,099

AB_RZL044 RSDL LOT
L.A. 78 sqm. (near Ynares Gym)
LORENAR SUBD. Brgy San Roque,
Min Bid Price: P 142,499

AB_RZL045 RSDL LOT
L.A 300 sqm. (near MERALCO)
Bohemia St., BROOKSIDE HILLS SUBD., Cainta, Antipolo City
Min Bid Price: P 850,099

LAS PIÑAS
AB_LSP002 RSDL LOT w/ 2-STRY RSDL BLDG.
L.A 331 sqm F.A. 386.28 sqm.
Gem Road, PILAR VILLAGE
Min Bid Price P 4,050,099

MANILA
AB_MNL001 RSDL CONDO UNIT
F.A. 157 94sqm
STA ELENA CONDO, Sta Elena St., Binondo (near New Divisoria Shopping Center)
Min Bid Price P 3,600,099

MARIKINA
AB_MAR003 RSDL w/ COMM'L LOT w/ 2-STRY BLDG.
L.A. 293 sqm. F.A. 160.2 sqm
Bonifacio Ave. Cor. Lot 91 BO. BARANGCA (near River Bank Mall)
Min Bid Price: P 2,550,099

MUNTINLUPA
AB_MUN004 RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY BLDG. w/ DRIVER'S QUARTER & BAMBOO HOUSE
L.A. 300 sqm F.A. 250.10 sqm
Ipil St., DONA ROSARIO HEIGHTS (near Britanny Bay Vil)
Min Bid Price: P 2,720,099

ORTIGAS, PASIG
AB_PSG005 RSDL CONDO UNIT w/ PRKG LOT
F.A. 210 14 sqm.
PARC CHATEAU CONDO., Onynx cor. Sapphire & Garnet Road, Ortigas Complex
Min Bid Price: P 8,075.099

QUEZON CITY
AB_QCB006 RSDL CONDO UNIT TEMPUS PLACE CONDOMINIUM II, (near Q.C. Hall) Makatarungan Road, Diliman

Floor Area	Min Bid Price
125.95 sqm.	P 3,400,699
60.52 sqm.	P 1,634,099
102 01 sqm.	P 2,754,299
126.85 sqm.	P 3,424,999

AB_QCB007 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 2,000 sqm. F.A. 449 sqm.
Pasacola St., BRGY. NAGKAISANG NAYON Novaliches (near Doña Rosario Subd.)
Min Bid Price: P 7,200,099

TANAY, RIZAL
AB_RZL047 COMM'L LOT w/ 3 STRY COMM'L BLDG
L.A. 368 sqm F.A. 1,078 sqm.
Yujuico St., Poblacaion TANAY (near Jollibee)
Min Bid Price: P 6,800,099

AB_RZL046 RSDL LOTS w/ 2 STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 560 sqm. (near NEBA)
Milan St., SAN FRANCISCO VILLAGE, Munoz, Taytay
Min Bid Price: P 2,400,099

AB_RZL048 AGRI-IND'L LOT w/ POULTRY HOUSE, OFFICE w/ GARAGE, RSDL / OFFICE BLDG w/ BASEMENT
L.A 38,044 sqm
Emilio Dela Paz St., Maybancal Morong, Taytay (near Xava Farm)
Min Bid Price P 6 800.099

LUZON

BATANGAS
Text 09175443063
AB_BAT011 RSDL /AGRI LOT w/ SEVERAL POULTRY HOUSE & AN OLD RSDL HOUSE
L.A. 10,890 sqm F.A. 200 sqm.
Barrio Dagatan, San Jose, BAUAN (near Church plaza)
Min Bid Price: P 3,400,099

AB_BAT012 AGRICULTURAL LOT
L.A. 3,941 sqm.
Barrio Tinurik, TANAUAN
(near Tanauan Public market)
Min Bid Price: P 945,899

BULACAN
Text 09273333733
AB_BUL013 IND'L / RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY WAREHOUSE & 3 SINGLE STRY BLDG.
L.A. 1,579.00 sqm F.A. 917.47 sqm
Along Muntinlupa Road, Barrio Duhat, BOCAUE (near Marilao Exit)
Min Bid Price: P 5,400,099

AB_BUL014 IND'L LOT w/ WRHSE
L.A 970 sqm. F.A 930 sqm
RIS INDUSTRIAL SUBD.. Bo. Tabe, Guiguinto (near Guiguinto Public market)
Min Bid Price: P 6,300,099

AB_BUL015 IND'L LOT w/ WRHSE
L.A. 860 sqm F.A. 826 sqm
RIS INDUSTRIAL SUBD., Bo Tabe, Guiguinto
(near Guiguinto Public market)
Min Bid Price: P5,850,099

AB_BUL016 RSDL 2 ADJ. LOT w/ 2 DILAPIDATED RSDL UNITS
L.A 1,521 sqm F.A 264 sqm.
Bayugo Road, MEYCAUAYAN
(infront of Brgy. Bayugo Brgy. Hall)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,240,099

CAVITE
Text 09189048230
AB_CVT017 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm.
RODEO COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE, Barrio Esperanza, Alfonso
(farm lot near Tagaytay)
Min Bid Price: P 1,200,099

AB_CVT018 RSDL LOT w/ SPLIT LEVEL RSDL BLDG
L.A. 115 sqm. F.A. 64 sqm.
Aniban, BACOOR
(near market & coastal road)
Min Bid Price: P 360,099

AB_CVT019 RSDL LOT
L.A. 444 sqm.
Gomez St., AYALA SOUTHVALE VILLAGE, Phase I, Molino, Bacoor
(near Alabang Town Center)
Min Bid Price: P 7,192,899

AB_CVT020 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW TYPE RSDL BLDG w/ GARAGE
L.A. 374 sqm F.A.200 sqm.
Malagasang Road, Malagasang II-B, BACOOR (near Dasma Town proper)
Min Bid Price: P 2,700,099

AB_CVT021 RSDL LOT w/ 3-STRY RSDL BLDG w/ ROOF DECK & RADIO ROOM
L.A. 120 sqm. F.A. 413 sqm
Ykal St. ANDREAVILLE EXEC. Salitran, Dasmarinas (near Orchard & De la Salle-Dasma)
Min Bid Price: P 3,400,099

AB_CVT022 RSDL LOT w/ 2-STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 150 sqm. F.A. 289 sqm.
Dona Anding St., MARTIN DE PORRES SUBD Bayan Luma, Imus (very near Imus market)
Min Bid Price: P 2,070,099

AB_CVT024 RSDL LOT w/ STRY RSDL/ COMM'L BLDG w/ROOFDECK
L.A. 159 30 sqm F.A. 513 sqm.
Bukandala, Provincial Road, MARICRIS HOMES Alapan I, Imus (near Robinson Imus)
Min Bid Price: P 4,000,099

ILOCOS NORTE
AB_ILN061 RSDL./IND'L LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 4,916.00sqm.
Cabungaan South, LAOAG CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 2,550,099

AB_ILN062 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,469.00sqm.
Camangaan, LAOAG CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 998,999

LAGUNA
Text 09178054175
AB_LGN025 RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 222 sqm. F.A. 302 sqm.
KATAPATAN MUTUAL HOMES SUBD., Banay-Banay, Cubuyao
(front of Pamantasan ng Cabuyao)
Min Bid Price: P 2,700,099

AB_LGN026 VACANT RSDL LOT
L.A. 1615 sqm.
Along Unnamed Bo. Road, Brgy Libis, Lalakay, LOS BAÑOS
(near Splash Mountain Resort)
Min Bid Price: P 2,720,099

AB_LGN027 RSDL LOT w/ RESTHOUSE
L.A. 2,092 sqm.
Barrio Balay Hangin, CALAUAN
(near Calauan Town Proper)
Min Bid Price: P 10,400,099

AB_LGN028 IND'L LOT w/ 1 STRY BLDG.
L.A. 483 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
Along National Road. Brgy Dayap CALAUAN(beside Anita Rice Mill)
Min Bid Price: P 900,099

AB_LGN029 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW RSDL BLDG.
L.A. 180 sqm. F.A. 180 sqm
Burgos St., PACITA COMPLEX, San Pedro (near Community Hospital)
Min Bid Price: P 1,980,099

AB_LGN030 RSDL LOT
L.A. 222 sqm.
SOUTH CITY HOMES,Calaboso Biñan (near La Consolacion Coll.)
Min Bid Price: P 585,099

AB_LGN033 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 346 sqm. F.A. 105 sqm.
Bagong, Bayan, STA. CRUZ
(front of Laguna Transit)
Min Bid Price. P 1,105,099

AB_LGN034 RICE MILL
L.A. 1239 sqm.
Rizal St., Pila, LAGUNA
(beside Pila Public market)
Min Bid Price: P 2,790,099

AB_LGN035 RSDL LOT
L.A. 330 sqm.
ATDRAMM SUBD., Brgy Callios, Sta Cruz (near Brgy Callos Elem. Schl)
Min Bid Price: P 594,099

AB_LGN036 RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,799 sqm.
Brgy. Del Remedio, SAN PABLO CITY
(near Qualibrant Marketing & BC Motor)
Min Bid Price: P 3,780,099

AB_LGN037 RSDL LOT w/ STRUCTURE
L.A. 527 sqm
San Francisco, VICTORIA
(near Victoria Town proper)
Min Bid Price: P 190,099

NUEVA VISCAYA
AB_NV136 RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,368 sqm
Along Nat'l Road, Bo Bugnay, DIADI
Min Bid Price' P 637 099

PANGASINAN
Text 09154348252
AB_PSN138 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,883 sqm
Poblacion, ROSALES
(near Li Slang Giap Elem. School)
Min Bid Price: P 449,299

AB_PSN140 RSDL LOT w/ 2-SRTY BLDG
L.A. 4,000 sqm
Carmen West, ROSALES
(beside Little Shoe Integrated School)
Min Bid Price: P 11,050,099

AB_PSN141 RSDL LOT
L.A. 470 Sqm
San Lorenzo Street, VILLASIS
(near Li Siong Giap Elem. School)
Min Bid Price: P 59,999

QUEZON PROVINCE
Text 09209222495
AB_QP142 RSDL / COMM'L LOT w/ 3 STRUCTURES
L.A. 1,694 sqm. F.A. 576.15 sqm.
A. Bonifacio St., GUMACA
(former BLTB station/near Gumaca Comm'l Area)
Min Bid Price: P 9,000,099

AB_QP143 COMM'L LOT W/ 5 SRTY BLDG & ROOFDECK
L.A. 419 sqm F.A.1672.46 sqm
Lucena, Quezon Ave. cor. Leon Guinto, LUCENA CITY
(near Lucena Capitol & OPM Bldg.)
Min Bid Price: P 19,000,099

AB_QP144 RSDL LOT
L.A. 252 sqm.
Netherland St. UNIVERSITY VILLAGE BO. Ibbang,Dupaya, Lucena City (near SM Lucena & Enverga University)
Min Bid Price: P 425,099

AB_QP145 IND'L/COMM'L LOT w/ RICE MILL BLDG & 2 STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 1,446 sqm F.A. 473.5 sqm
Diversion Road, Bo. Ilayang Mayao, LUCENA CITY
(near Lucena Grand Terminal & Metropolis Subd.)
Min Bid Price: P2,380,099

AB_QP146 COMM'L LOT
L.A. 944 sqm.
Quezon Ave cor. P. Paterno St., TAYABAS (near St. John Bosco Academy & Tayabas Church)
Min Bid Price: P 8,550,099

PALAWAN
AB_PAL155 RSDL LOT
L.A. 8,159 sqm
Santol Road cor. San Jose St., PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY
Min Bid Price: P 1,800,099

AB_PAL156 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,289 sqm
Brgy Bancao-Bancao, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY (near Palawan Polytechnic College)
Min Bid Price: P 2,970,099

AB_PAL157 RSDL LOT
L.A 600 sqm
Brgy. Bancao-Bancao, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY (near Palawan Polytechnic College)
Min Bid Price: P 810,099

AB_PAL158 ADJ LOTS w/ NIPA HUT
L.A. 5,000 sqm
Manalo Extension, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY (near Palawan Polytechnic College)
Min Bid Price: P 6,750,099

AB_PAL159 RSDL LOT
L.A.1,000 sqm
Brgy San Jose, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY (near Puerto Princessa Memorial Hospital)
Min Bid Price: P 340,099

AB_PAL160 COMM'L LOT
L.A.1,260 sqm
Along Rizal Ave., Camarigan, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY
Min Bid Price: P 8,360,099

ZAMBALES
AB_ZAM153 RSDLCOMM'L LOT W/ 3 STRY BLDG
L.A. 1,396 sqm F.A. 1,691.70 sqm
Fendler cor Perimeter St., East Tapinac, OLONGAPO
(near James Gordon Hospital)
Min Bid Price: P 34,200,099

VISAYAS

AKLAN
Text 09206186282
AB_AKL051 RSDL/ COMM'L LOT
L.A 487 sqm
C. Laserna St., Poblacion, KALIBO
Min Bid Price: P 5,220,099

AB_AKL052 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW & WAREHOUSE
L.A. 531 sqm. F.A.129 sqm
BRGY. TINIGAO
(near Tanicao Elem. School)
Min Bid Price P 618 099

ANTIQUE
Text 09206186282
AB_ATO053 RSDL LOT
L.A 567 sqm
Brgy Road Funda-Dalipi, SAN JOSE (near Antique National School)
Min Bid Price: P 431,699

AB_ATO054 RSDL LOT
L.A. 597 sqm.
Brgy. Road Funda-Dalipi, SAN JOSE
(near Antique Nat'l School)
Min Bid Price. P 459,099

CAPIZ
Text 09206186282
AB_CP2055 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1000 sqm
Bo. Tiza & Bo. Malbill, ROXAS CITY
(near LTO)
Min Bid Price: P 950,099

ILOILO
Text 09206186282
AB_ILO049 RSDL / SUBD LOT
L.A. 423 sqm
ST. JOSEPH SUBD., Brgy.Cubay, Jaro, Iloilo
Min Bid Price: P 450,099

AB_ILO050 RSDL LOT w/ 2-STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A 497 sqm F.A 108.25 sqm
Poblacion, Municipality of POTOTAN
Min Bid Price: P 639,399

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Charisma of the cause

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

IN THE MOST RECENT VOLUME OF Leader to Leader, Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery, and Mark Thompson, authors of "Success Built to Last," attribute a leader's sustained success to the strength of the cause they pursue: "Enduringly successful people serve the cause—and they are lifted up by its power."

Great leaders have a burning passion to make a difference which fuels their action.

Self-centered leadership is inherently limited. As Porras, Emery and Thompson assert, wealth neither lasts nor satisfies. Power and fame are fleeting and fade quickly. Causes endure, causes fulfill, causes make a difference.

A leader's personal charisma is dwarfed by the charisma of the cause.

Perhaps no leader demonstrates this concept more clearly than Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A gifted speaker and charismatic leader, King burned with the flame of justice. His personal appeal was substantial, but it was trumped of the immensity of his dream.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

"I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

"I have a dream today."

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. articulated the dream, but it was not his alone. The dream was bubbling in the hearts of women in the back of buses, children forbidden to drink from the same fountain as their friends, and businessmen unable to get a fair shot at success due to the color of their skin.

The dream had simmered for years in the African-American community long before King dared to speak it boldly and proclaim it persistently.

The dream beckoned civil rights activists from the four corners of America and around the globe to demonstrate for freedom in the Deep South. The dream mobilized marches and swayed congressmen. The dream inspired poets, and lifted up the heads of the oppressed. The dream gave a voice to those suffering in silence and spawned a movement for civil rights.

The dream supplied freedom marchers with resolve in the wake of threats and abuse. The dream gave boldness to students confronting the barrier of segregation. The dream loaned strength to Martin Luther King Jr. through endless days, sleepless nights, and journeys to challenge the ugliest and most flagrant forms of racism in the United States.

Martin Luther King Jr. always placed more faith in the power of the dream than in his personal charisma. Perhaps that's why he was able to speak so confidently about the dream on the eve of his death, "It really doesn't matter with me now, because I have been to the mountaintop."

Although the security of his life was uncertain, the fate of the dream was sure. The dream had gathered into a massive wave moving the nation toward justice and equality, and no racist governor or white supremacy group could stem its tide. The dream was destined to change the country and bestow rights, long withheld, upon African-Americans.

MLK had seen the dream, and to that his life was devoted. Power, prestige, or awards mattered little. King lived his life for the dream, and watching it unfold was the greatest reward he could have possibly imagined.

To further explore the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., go to http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/mlk/king/. To read the full text of "The Cause Has Charisma" by Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery, and Mark Thompson, visit the Leader to Leader Institute online at: http://www.leadertoleader.orgl.

For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please e-mail us at bing@inspire.ph or call 813-2049/2732 and ask for Jesi or Bing. Text MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily SMS leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless!

CEOs behind the lens

From page B1

PHOTO BY LEO Riingen, president/CEO of Informatics, and president of the Camera Club of the Philippines

"When I look at everything around me, I see beautiful tableaus that will be there for just an instant, so I want to capture it," she says.

Siy is a probationary member, just like Paterno, but she hopes to pass in a month and become a full-fledged member of the CCP.

Leo Riingen, president and CEO of Informatics Holdings Philippines Inc., and this year's president of the CCP, says he actually went into photography years before he started his climb up the corporate ladder.

"I was already earning money as a wedding photographer. I must have taken pictures for over 200 weddings," Riingen says.

That love for photography never left him even as he went to work for multinational companies and then set up his own company.

This is why he does not mind taking care of the many activities of the CCP, which takes up a considerable chunk of his time and effort.

He says that as president, he wants to open up the CCP to more people who share a love for photography.

"What we offer is camaraderie and sharing of tips and experiences in photography," Riingen says, "members are only too willing to share their knowledge because we all love photography."

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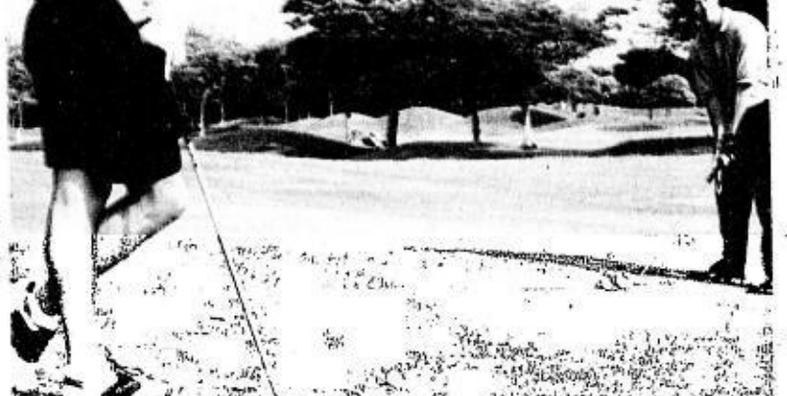

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For Announcement Purposes Only

In this issue, we present Part Two of INQUIRER Lifestyle's review of the fitting rooms in the more popular fashion shops ***(see below)*** *and department stores* ***(see F)****.*

Sunday LIFESTYLE

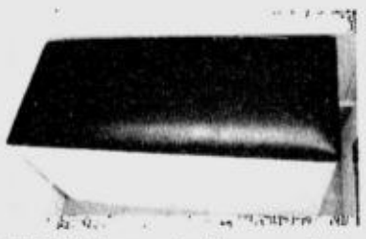
Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

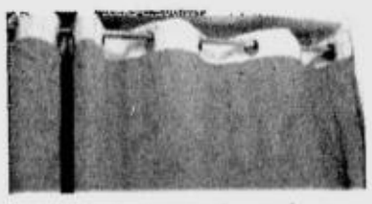
sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

CRITERIA USED

Size of fitting room; cleanliness; basic amenities (hooks, shelves, locks, chairs); mirror and lighting; number of fitting rooms; and service. Each shop was rated for each category on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the poorest and 5, the most outstanding.



BENCH lives up to the name by providing a comfy seat inside their fitting room.



NO, they're not seeing red at Dorothy Perkins because of the red curtains, but neither do they see you.

GOOD hooks at Topshop. Good service, too.

Selected shops—Robinsons Galleria

	Bayo	Bench	Dorothy Perkins	Ensembles	Folded & Hung	Freeway	Kamiseta	Levi's	Marks & Spencer	Topshop
Size	***	**	***	***	***	****	****	*****	*****	****
Cleanliness—absence of clutter, etc.	**	****	***	***	****	****	****	*****	****	****
Basic amenities—hooks, shelf, locks	**	****	***	***	***	****	***	*****	***.	***
Mirror and lighting	***	***	****	***	***	****	****	*****	*****	****
Quantity	***	***	*****	****	***.	****	****	***	***	***
Service	*.	**	**	****	*.	****	*	*****	*****	*****

Robinsons Galleria

Between a ghost and a rock star

Text and photos by Pam Pastor

Bayo

I walked into Bayo and thought I had walked into our spare room at home. Someone was ironing clothes on an old ironing board by the fitting room and there was an electric fan in one corner. Inside the fitting room was an old dirty-looking plastic stool that I don't think anyone would want to use. No one offered help either. Oh well, at least they had a lock on the door.

Bench

Aside from hooks, Bench's fitting room had a bench inside—well, not really a bench, more like a comfy seat. The place was a bit cramped, but still manageable. You can put a shirt on without knocking your elbows against the walls. The mirror was placed against the wall at a slight angle, which makes me wonder what kind of magic that creates when you look at your reflection.

Dorothy Perkins

I must have turned into a ghost when I walked into Dorothy Perkins because I was pretty much ignored by the staff with the exception of one girl by the fitting room who smiled at me. There are three dressing rooms, each one covered with a thick fuchsia curtain. The Last Chance To Buy rack is also in the fitting-room area. Unfortunately, boxes and boxes of stuff are also in this area, making the place look like a stockroom. I tried on a dress, returned it myself and walked out of the place without anyone saying a word to me.

Ensembles

Three fitting rooms, red curtains, three hooks. Nothing spectacular but the service was good. Bonus points because the salesgirl led me into the fitting room.

Folded & Hung

Fitting rooms have heavy mirror doors that I found hard to open. Because they are heavy, the doors are almost always closed. And because no one offered any help, another shopper and I stood outside one of the fitting rooms for a long time, not realizing it was empty.

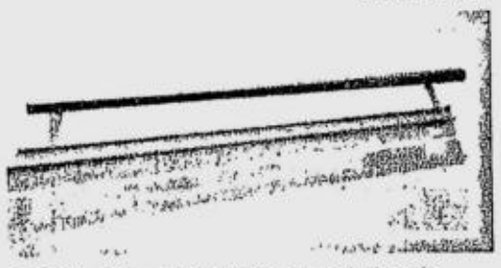
Freeway

Everything was white and clean. The hooks and metal bar seemed extra-sturdy. And the service was great. The salesgirl offered help without me having to ask.

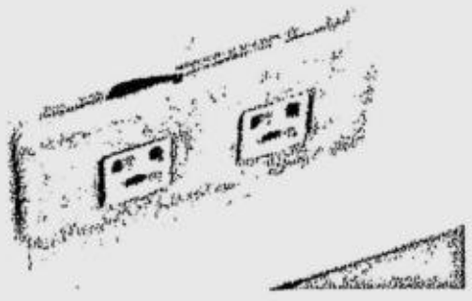
Kamiseta

Fitting rooms were spacious, with denim curtains assuring your privacy. But there was zero service. I was obviously trying to look for tops in different

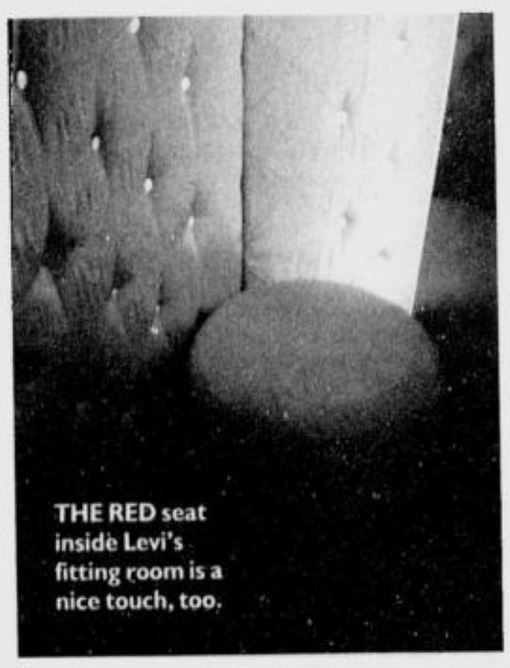
BETWEEN/ C4



BARS in Dorothy Perkins come in handy when you're trying on an armful of clothes.



CHARGE, anyone? An electrical outlet in the Marks & Spencer's fitting room.



THE RED seat inside Levi's fitting room is a nice touch, too.

Robinsons Supermarket

Go for good taste.

Take the first bite at healthy living at Robinsons Supermarket!

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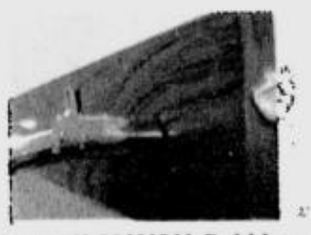
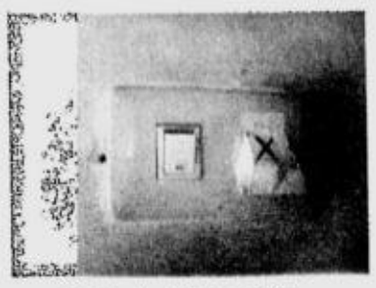
Tutuban Center

Eat Well Spend Less

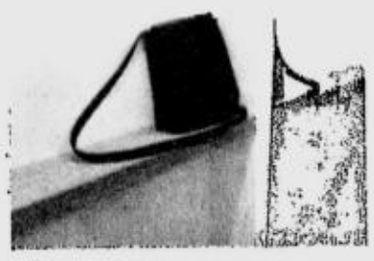


STUCK ON YOU. Bubble gum on the wall of People R People's fitting room...



... and a busted light switch.

PEEKABOO. A portal for mice in Bayo?



BENCH. Sturdy shelf for bags and stuff

KASHIECA. Improvised wooden shelf with chipped edge needs replacement.

MARKS & Spencer. Inviting fitting room

Gateway Mall

Pleasant surprises and sordid shocks

Text and photos
by Vangie Baga-Reyes

Bayo

One of the two fitting rooms has two gaping holes, one located behind the door (burrowed by insects and bugs?), and another one below the concrete wall (probably a portal for rats). Need we say more?

Bench

The four fitting rooms are very tidy, no clothes or hangers left in them. There's even an attendant standing by the whole time you're inside the room. But there's only one hook and a little dusting and a paint job would help.

Folded & Hung

The staff is friendly, helpful and knowledgeable. But the two changing rooms have poor lighting, broken hooks and stained mirrors.

Kamiseta

Changing rooms are airy and spacious, but rather shabby. The wooden floors badly need repair or repaint. Curtains also have grease stains.

Kashieca

Salespersons are well-trained and friendly. In fact, there's a pink note inside the fitting rooms reminding you that they're happy to assist you and that you don't need to leave the room in case you need anything. The wooden shelf intended for your bag, however, has cracks on the edges and needs replacement.

Mango

This shop definitely knows how popular their goods are. They have nine fitting rooms with sizeable mirrors and good lighting. Salesclerks readily assist customers in the rooms, while keeping track of the merchandise. But floor rugs need some vacuuming.

Marks & Spencer

Reception staff is very helpful and meticulous. You can see how they maintain the shop by straightening and promptly returning items to their appropriate places. Each of the three fitting rooms includes a three-sided mirror, two metal hooks, bright light and a fire sprinkler. A maximum of six garments is allowed. Cool!

Mossimo

Overhaul needed here. One of the four fitting rooms is used to store goods; big bundles of clothes block the way to the room, not to mention the electric steamer; one lock is busted; and the lights are not good enough to see if the shirt fits well.

People R People

"Obsessive compulsive" best describes how this store runs its fitting rooms. Each room has a mini white board outside the door and the vigilant salesclerk writes down the number of clothes you bring in as well as the number of persons who get in. This should have been okay, but she failed to inspect the rooms for a busted light switch and chewing gum stuck on the wall.

Selected shops-Gateway Mall

	Bayo	Bench	Folded & Hung	Kamiseta	Kashieca	Mango	Marks & Spencer	Mossimo	People R People
Size	**	***	**	***	**	****	****	***	***
Cleanliness--absence of clutter, etc.	**	***	***	*	**	***	****	**	*
Basic amenities--hooks, shelf, locks	**	***	**	***	**	**	***	**	**
Mirror and lighting	***	***	**	***	****	***	****	**	**
Quantity	**	****	**	****	**	*****	***	***	***
Service	**	***	***	**	**	****	***	***	***

MOSSIMO. Say hello to plastic wrappers and electric steamer.

KAS
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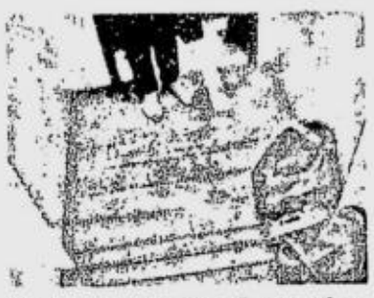
Market! Market!

Market-size rooms

ABUNDANCE of cubicles at SuperBench

PETIT Monde needs to go easy on dramatic lighting.



WATCH out for dirty floors at Jag.

Text and photos
by Fran Katigbak

Bayo

Minimal but sturdy-looking amenities, ample lighting and full-size wall mirror brighten the tidy nook and give the illusion of space. Double thumbs-up to friendly, helpful salesclerks. This branch knows the right tricks to maximize small space. Other Bayo shops should take heed.

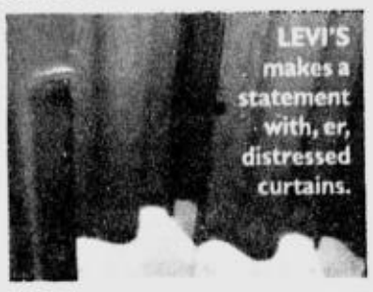
Folded & Hung

We wonder if someone tried to steal the light bulbs from F&H's fitting rooms for these fixtures to be installed way up, up, up in the very high ceiling. You'd need to drag in an industrial ladder to replace them. All the light (or what's left of it) could do was cast shadows on every inch of our reflection on the mirror.

Freeway

Pity the vertically challenged person who attempts to use Freeway cubicles. She (okay, *he*, too) would need tall heels to reach the lock perched on the upper corner of the door. Assuming there is a lock, of course—one of three rooms had none. Cramped stalls need to be cleaned and there should be more hooks as well.

PENSHOPPE'S shabbiest chic



Jag

Remember what mom used to say about never going barefoot lest your feet attract germs and bacteria which cause bad things to grow in the body? We had that graphic flashback when we stepped out of our shoes to fit a pair of Jag jeans. Oh, the thick layer of dirt on our feet! Eew! Cramped fitting rooms also lack amenities and were blocked from outside by a pile of merchandise. Accommodating staff was the only saving grace.

Selected shops-Market! Market!

	Bayo	Folded & Hung	Freeway	Jag	Kamiseta	Levi's
Size	****	**	***	***	*****	*****
Cleanliness--absence of clutter, etc.	*****	****	***	**	***	***
Basic amenities--hooks, shelf, locks	***	***	**	***	***	****
Mirror and lighting	*****	**	****	***	*****	*****
Quantity	*****	***	**	***	*****	****
Service	*****	****	***	*****	****	**

Kamiseta

This boutique knows only too well a shopaholic's needs. Cubicles have enough floor space for the overflowing shopping bags and, of course, a wide-angled mirror for the lady's vanity. It's impossible not to strike a pose in that flirty shirtdress when you've got room and terrific looking glass. Cubicles need a bit of dusting though.

Levi's

Fitting rooms make a statement with red walls, full-length swing mirrors, protective rubber mats not found at other jean shops, and chunky nail head-like bag hooks. We're willing to forgive the distressed (read: tattered) curtains. But salesclerks smugly telling us the branch doesn't offer sizes over 29 only after we failed to squeeze into one? Too annoying to ignore.

Mossimo

This branch has no choice but to face space limitations, especially for fitting rooms. So, having experienced good service from the crew, we rate Mossimo average.

Penshoppe

Shabbiest we've seen of the lot. In contrast to fitting rooms of other branches, the two stalls here fall flat on presentability and cleanliness. They should wipe the greasy mirrors, mend the worn-down curtains and sweep the dusty floor.

Petit Monde

Go easy on dramatic lighting. We prefer flattering, not deceiving. Not all clothes that look smashing in dim

WH
bulb
very

SM Megamall

Not all disappointing

Text and photos
by Amy I. Rañola

Bayo

Only two fitting rooms were available because the third was used as a storage area. It was quite uncomfortable trying on clothes in a room that had drapes for a door. But a nice saleslady patiently stood guard until we were done fitting.

Bench

Six fitting rooms may be okay for the size of the store, but not enough to accommodate their many shoppers. Points for the extra fluorescent light bulb per fitting room apart from the general lighting over the fitting area.

Cinderella

The store is too big for only seven fitting rooms. Other sections of the store are located far from the rooms, and shoppers can only bring three garments at most. Good thing service was good.

CINDERELLA's policy

Ensembles

There were three fitting rooms, but only two were available as the other one was used for storage. Each room had three hooks and the lighting was too dim and unnatural. But the staff was friendly and gladly helped me find my size.

Folded & Hung

For a store with lots of shoppers, six fitting rooms still aren't enough. I had to settle for the room that had a faulty light bulb because the rest of the rooms were already taken. Points for the eight hooks and generally clean rooms.

Freeway

The fitting rooms had six hooks and a steel bar, more than enough for the limited number of garments allowed to fit. There were three rooms, which I think is sufficient. The salesladies were really attentive.

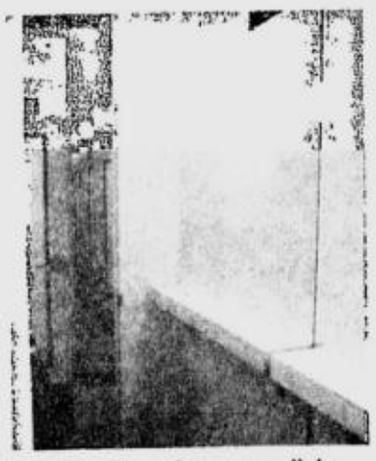
Her Bench

There were supposedly three fitting rooms. However, one had no hook and the door did not lock (at least the one I was in), while the door of another one did not close at all. The fitting rooms were located opposite an open dirty stockroom. And no one was there to assist. But, hey, the lighting was good.

ENSEMBLES. The orangey lighting affects our perception of the actual color of the items.

Kamiseta

Only four out of the seven fitting rooms were functional because the rest had no hooks or anything else to hang or place their items on. The eighth room was turned into a storage room. However, what they lacked in amenities was compensated for by the cordial staff and the cozy, homey feel of the store.



BENCH. There's an extra light bulb for better lighting.

Mango

Getting a fitting room was hassle-free as there were eight rooms. Also, there was a fitting room clerk who assisted me to the rooms. My guy-friend was not allowed to enter the premises, as it was policy.

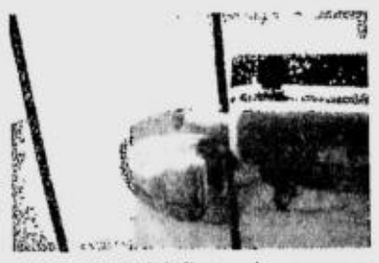
Marks & Spencer

My favorite stop. The four fitting rooms were the biggest among those surveyed. Each had a comfortable seat inside, bright fluorescent lighting, and six hooks in pairs that were strategically placed on the walls of the room. Plus, the salesladies were warm and welcoming.

Penshoppe

It wasn't just a regular fitting room. It was like walking into a punk rock teenager's bedroom. I loved its glam-rock structure, complementing the overall theme of the store.

CINDERELLA. A comfortable seat makes fitting jeans a lot easier.



HER BENCH. What privacy can a fitting room with a jammed door lock provide?

People R People

There were only three fitting rooms (the fourth one was used for storage). They were pretty lax with the regulations, as up to four items were allowed to be brought in. Points for the room size and amenities—sitting area, metal bar and hooks.

There were six fitting rooms, which I think were enough for the huge size of the store, but too many for the very few shoppers. Points for the saleslady who was attentive and friendly.

Selected shops-SM Megamall

	Bayo	Bench	Cinderella	Ensembles	Folded & Hung	Freeway	Her Bench	Kamiseta	Mango	Marks & Spencer	Penshoppe	People R People
Size	*****	***	****	***	***	****	***	****	****	*****	*****	*****
Cleanliness--absence of clutter, etc.	****	****	***	*****	****	****	***	****	*****	*****	*****	*****
Basic amenities--hooks, shelf, locks	**	**	****	***	****	*****	**	*	***	*****	****	*****
Mirror and lighting	****	****	*****	***	**	*****	****	****	*****	****	****	*****
Quantity	***	***	***	**	***	****	**	**	*****	*****	****	*****
Service	*****	*	****	*****	*	*****	**	*****	*****	*****	****	***

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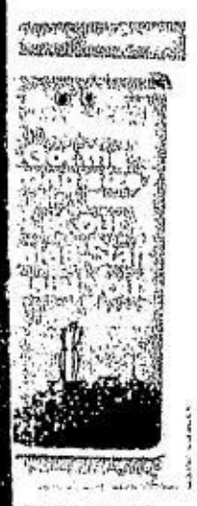
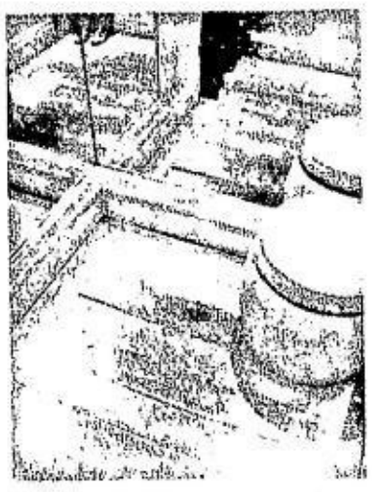


HIECA. Good nder about what ales staff can do.



KAMISETA. Floor badly needs repair and repaint.

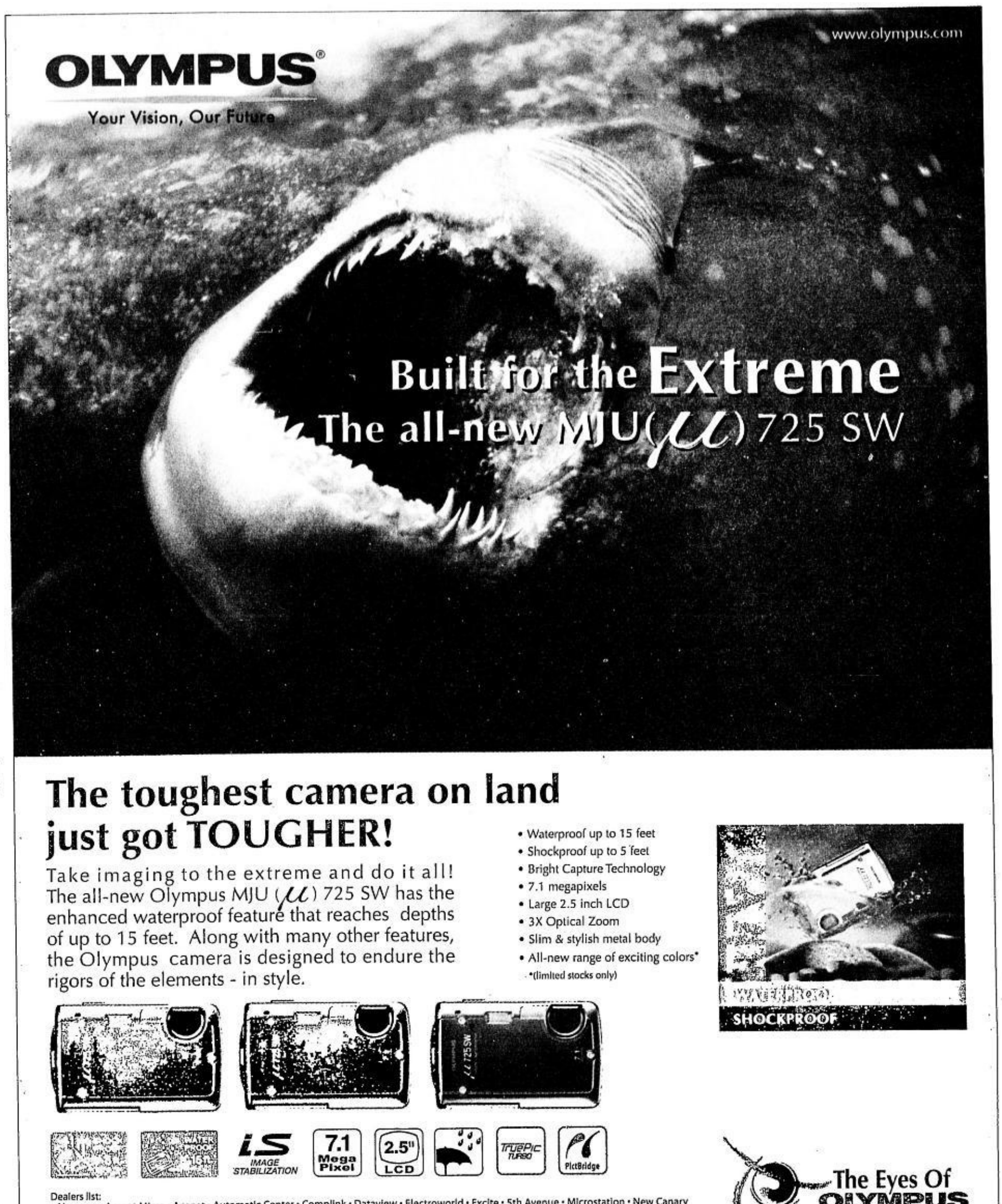
Mossimo	Penshoppe	Petit Monde	SuperBench
**	*****	***	***
****	**	****	**
**	**	****	***
****	**	***	***
***	****	*****	*****
*****	****	*****	***

Care F&H's light e way up on the high ceiling?

changing rooms have the same effect under bright light. But we definitely dig the cozy cabana-like theme and very accommodating staff.

SuperBench

At last an abundance of cubicles! Eight just for women! Alas, behind the first door was a jungle—articles of clothing strewn atop the shelf, denims hanging on a hook, and a munchkin playing Tarzan as he dangled from the doorknob. The adjacent room was no less chaotic; we couldn't figure out if it was occupied or not.



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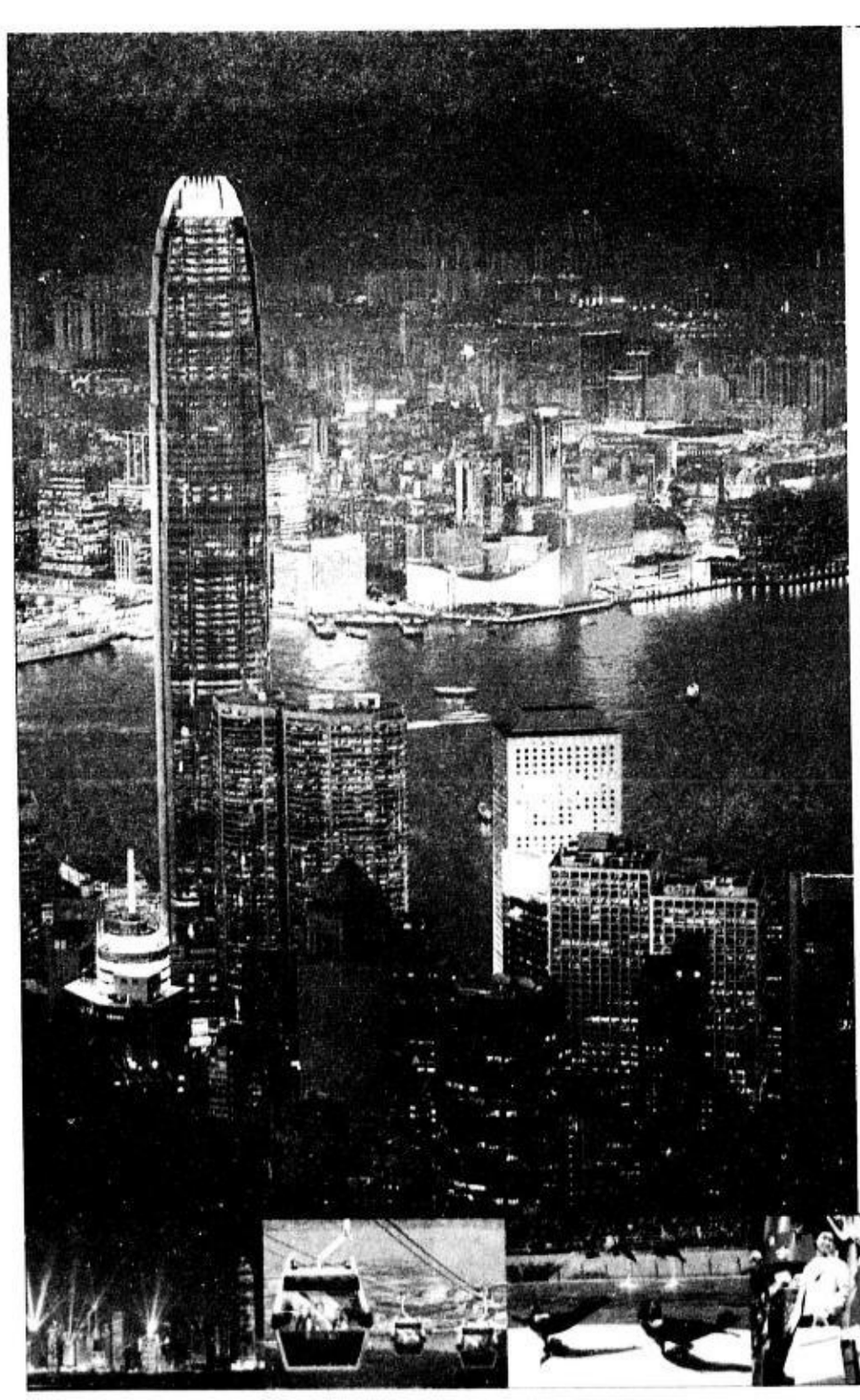
The Eyes Of OLYMPUS



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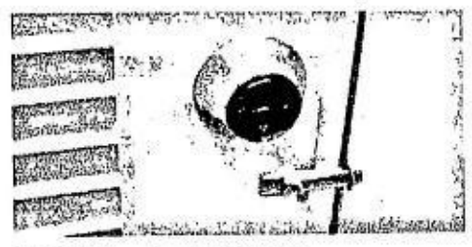
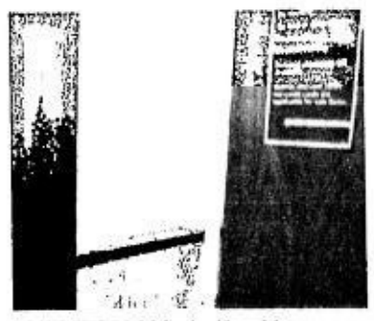
HANGER, crumpled paper, plastic bag litter the floor.



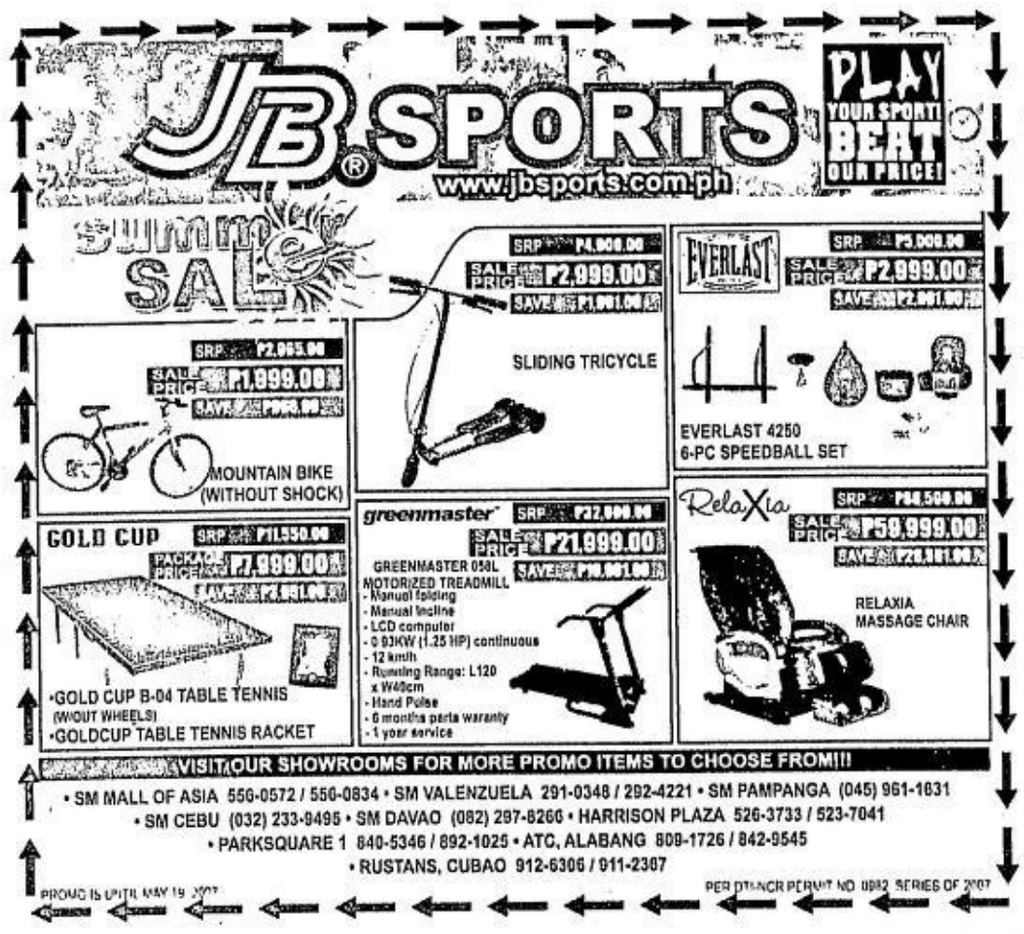
LUCKILY, a door that locks



FUNCTIONAL shelf at Her Bench

Selected shops: SM North

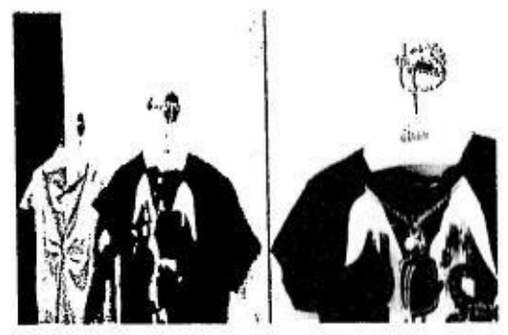
	Bayo	Her Bench	Cinderella	Mango
Size	**	*	***	*****
Cleanliness — absence of clutter, etc.	**	**	*	****
Basic amenities— hooks, shelf, locks	**	**	**	****
Mirror and lighting	**	**	**	****
Quantity	***	****	***	*****
Service	**	**	*	****



SM North Edsa

Renovation going on

CINDERELLA. Not enough fitting rooms for a store thrice the size of a regular boutique



MANGO. Points for its clean rooms, room size and amenities

Text and photos by Belle V. Bondoc

SM NORTH EDSA IS KNOWN AS SM'S BUSIest mall. According to one report, the mall attracts 315,000 people a day, or 15 percent of the two million Filipinos that the SM malls attract. The mall is currently undergoing a major renovation, so expect the worst!

With the newly opened The Block and a planned expansion, the SM North Edsa is set to overtake SM Megamall as the second largest SM shopping mall next to SM Mall of Asia. The stores at The Block are new and clean.

Bayo

Popular girl brand Bayo is quite big, with three well maintained fitting rooms. There is a fourth one but it is used as a storage room. Minus points, too, for salesclerks who were not so accommodating and attentive.

Cinderella

Located at the main entrance of the mall, Cinderella is probably one of the busiest stores in this mall. It is quite crowded, especially during sale season, so expect long queues at its fitting rooms. There are only three fitting rooms for a store thrice the size of a single boutique. The rooms are littered with hangers left by previous shoppers. The air-conditioning is also very poor.

Her Bench

Her Bench has four tiny stalls that are not enough to meet the expectations of its customers. Room size is not comfortable for fitting.

Mango

Mango has enough stalls to accommodate its shoppers. There are 10 "curtain-door" dressing rooms, each with one full-length mirror. All stalls have perfect lighting with clean carpets, and shoppers can try on as many pieces as they want in one go. The store also has friendly and accommodating staff.

Robinsons Galleria

From page C1

sizes, but no one came forward to help, once again making me feel as if I had morphed into an invisible ghost shopper.

Levi's

Big points for good service. The girl not only assisted me in finding the right size, she told me about their special sale and new arrivals. Then I was led into the fitting room and all of a sudden, I felt like I was in a music video. The entire place was hot pink and the lighting was flattering. There were three hooks and a red chair in one corner. The walls were nice and padded, which would work really well if you needed to brace yourself against the wall to squeeze into tight jeans. Kudos to Levi's for having the sexiest dressing room and for making shoppers feel like rock stars, even for just a few minutes.

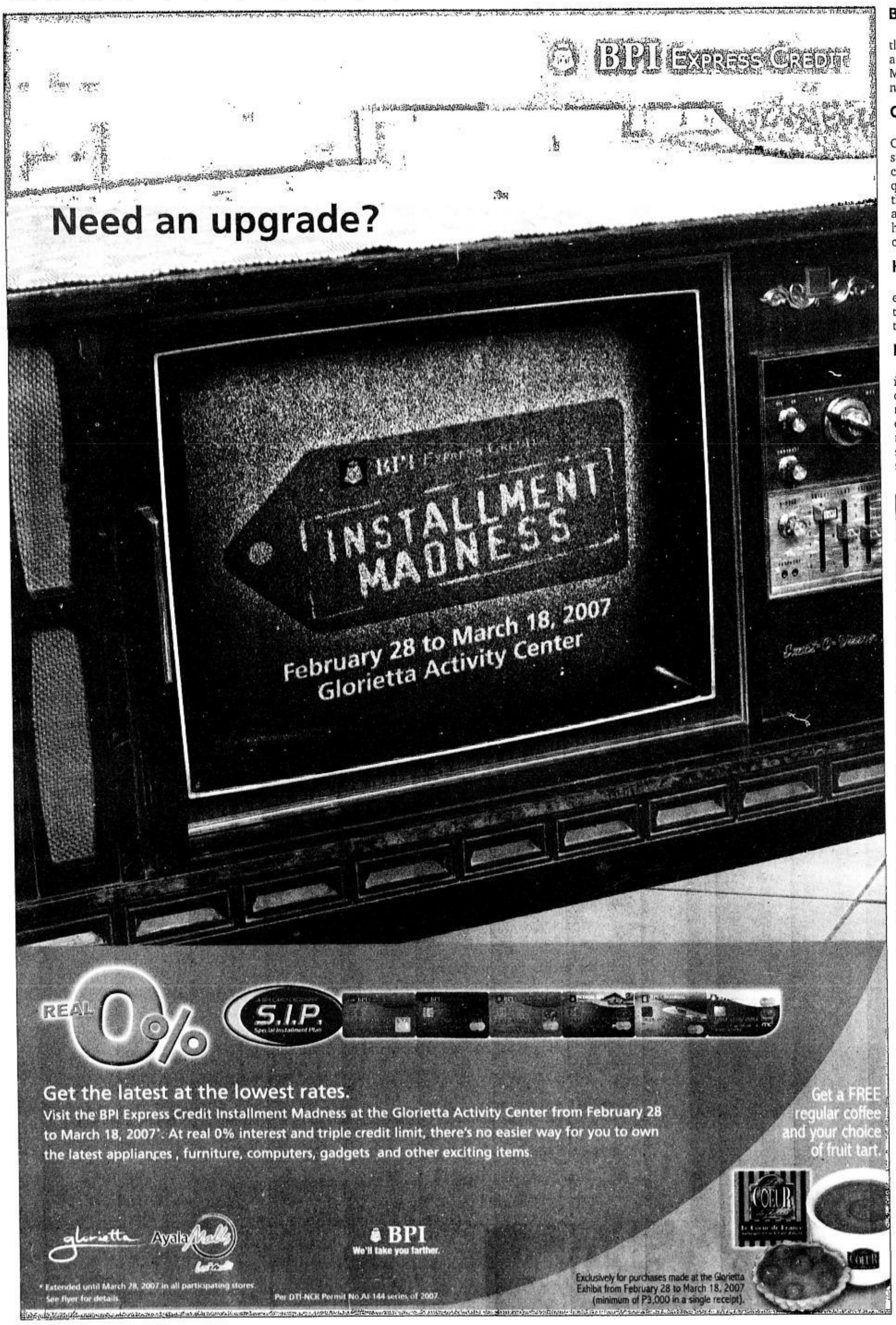
Marks & Spencer

I will forever be thankful to the lighting in Marks & Spencer's fitting room for telling me that I had too much blush-on that day. The staff was welcoming, greeting shoppers enthusiastically as they walked in. The girl carried the shirt for me to the fitting room and waited a couple of feet outside the door in case I needed more assistance. There were no seats inside the fitting room, only hooks and a small ledge where you could rest your handbag. The fitting room was big enough to dance in—it was tempting, actually.

Topshop

Service was good from the moment I walked in. One of the girls offered to help me find tank tops in the right size and carried them for me to the fitting room. Solid black curtains cover Topshop's two big fitting rooms. As if the huge mirror covering one wall of the fitting room wasn't enough, there was an even bigger one outside which you can use to see how your outfit would look from afar. The Last Chance to Buy rack, which is right by the fitting rooms, is also worth a look.

MARKS & Spencer offers good assistance to shoppers who want to try their clothes on.



SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2007

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ALL FRIENDS, no foes. Keren Pascual (center) with his favorite Famous friends Zanjoe Marudo, Richard Gomez, Lucy Torres-Gomez and Enchong Dee

SUPERMODELS Raya Mananquil, Isabel Roces, Phoemela Baranda, Bianca Valerio, Bubbles Paraiso and Valerie de los Santos

HOTNESS goes digital. The men of "aMen" are shown on a loop in a dozen plasma screens. Photos are by top photographer Mark Nicdao.

Sexy summer, here I come

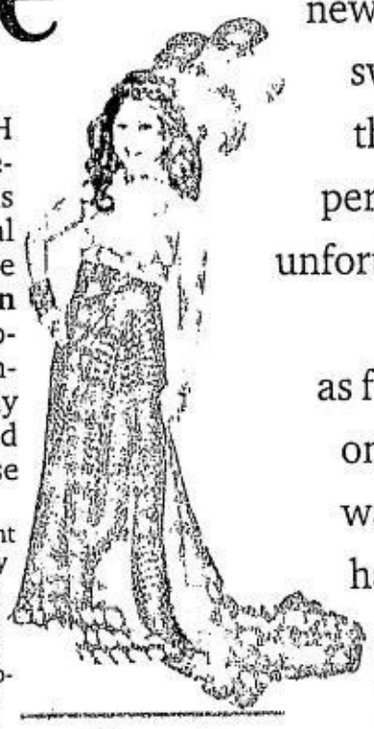
LONG-TIME friends Wig Tysmans, Maripi Muscat, Maurice Arcache and Josephine Knox

BROTHERS in Art: Han and Alex Van Hagen

LET SUMMER BURST FORTH with total thrill and excitement! As the weather turns hotter and hotter, so do the social events of the city. The temperature was sizzling at Famous PR **Keren Pascual**'s birthday party-cum-photo exhibit-cum-fashion show-cum-book launch, as his all-male, fully buffed models effortlessly strutted their stuff on an intimately close catwalk.

Keren is a master at integrating different elements and simultaneously launching any product in a most creative way. For his multi-theme birthday, the six-packs were within arm's length such that all the ladies were tempted to get a better grip of these objects of desire! And I'm talking about both the models' abs and the cans of Coke Light they were carrying. Indeed, the calorie-free, subliminal effect is all the more encouraging when the models and cans are sans tops.

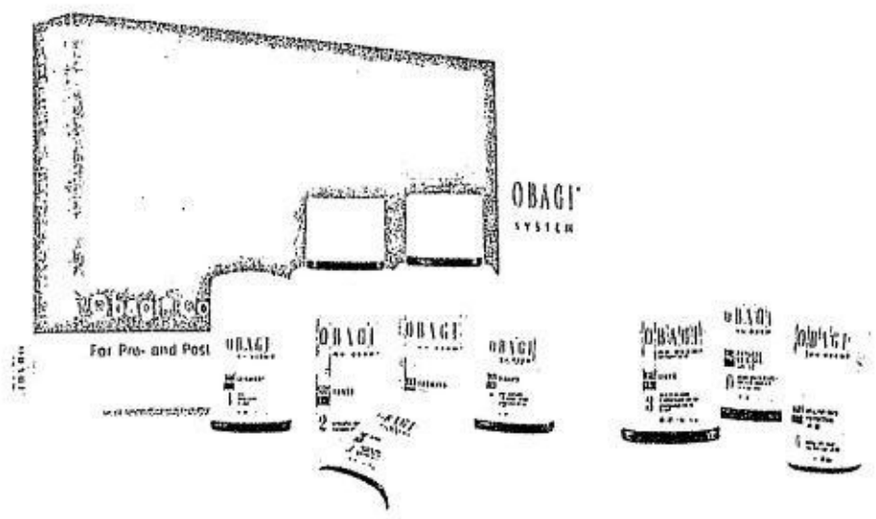
SEXY/ D2



TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Trying on the new Speedo swimsuit, the size is perfect but, unfortunately, it is not as flattering on me as it was on the half-Pinoy and half-Brit stunner who modeled it

FUTURE PERFECT



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MTV'S newest VJs. Binibining Pilipinas-World 2007 Maggie Wilson and actress Anne Curtis

SPEEDO Philippines owner Anna Celdran-Mahtani and mom-in-law Vandana Mahtani

PHOTOGRAPHER Rupert Jacinto, Maryanne Lumen and Tina Jacinto

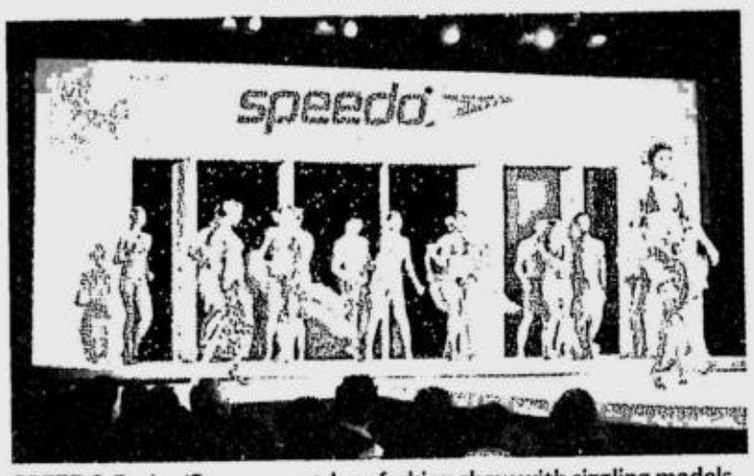
ART PATRONS Josine Elizalde and Annie Sarthou with artist BenCab (center)

Sexy summer, here I come

From page D1

Last year, Coke Light had a successful fashion show featuring the country's design trinity (**Rajo Laurel**, **Rhett Eala** and **Patrice Ramos-Diaz**) with an all-female, all-white show. For this year, Coke Light goes to the other side with a bubbling, all-men show with the country's top male models.

The Celio Spring/Summer collection kicked off in jaw-dropping high gear. The range of casual yet stylish clothing was pretty enough but more approval burst forth when the models trotted onstage sporting just Celio pants and exposing their gym-contoured bodies.



SPEEDO Spring/Summer outdoor fashion show with sizzling models

PHOTO session with Philip Abadicio, Sea Princess, Rupert and Tina Jacinto

The irresistibly delicious show ended with the gorgeous young models passing around Coke Light. Elated guests were then treated to a scrumptious buffet that was guilt-free, thanks to the specialized cuisine of **Florabelle Co.** Perfectly complemented by free-flowing Coke Light, the satisfied crowd continued to mingle in a chill-out setup right next to several TV monitors displaying the top male models.

As the evening drew to a close, the "aMen" coffee-table book, shot by ace photographer **Mark Nicdao**, was placed in the spotlight. A brainchild of Keren, this highly visual (read: no need for any words) book of the Philippines' top male models has amazing photographic shots and will be available around the middle of the year.

Once again, Keren and Coke Light have teamed up to produce an event that leaves one with a great taste and no feeling of heaviness. If only life were are as light and easy!

It's not too late to start that fitness and diet regime in time for summer. The battle of the bulge is a constant struggle but resistance and determination can do wonders.

Speedo splash

There are so many designs in the latest Spring/Summer Collection of Speedo—ranging from swimwear to fitness gear and surfing wear that camouflage those tiny unwanted bulges. From its high-octane, colorful fashion swimsuits to urban, cutting-edge workout apparel to its drag-defying, super-stretch bodysuits, Speedo has reinvented itself as the coolest brand in and out of the water. It has truly graduated from just the skimpy, groovy, stuck-in-the-'80s Speedo swimming trunks!

The Bikram instructors at **Tristan Choa**'s Bikram Yoga Manila (visit www.bikramyogamanila.com or call 8891011) actually wear Speedo. At first, it's pretty difficult to get your mind focused on the practice of this hot yoga but as you really get into the series, it's like we are all around a pool—in this case literally a puddle of sweat.

At the very private residence of British Ambassador **Peter Beckingham**, the eye-catching range of Speedo Collections, with its strong prints and intricate details, was deliciously presented to Manila's chic crowd.

JOHN Lloyd Cruz

LUIS Alandy

DASHING AJ Dee

GEMMA Fitzgerald of "Pinoy Dream Academy"

The expansive, outdoor garden fashion show had perfect weather and stage drama making the Speedo pieces shine on those stunning male and female models.

From watching Coke Light-buffed boys on a ramp to Speedo-enhanced female models, I feel like I seriously need to speed up my sculpting efforts. Speedo Philippines owners **Manish** and **Anna Mahtani** sent me the latest bodysuit to use for my scuba-diving trips.

Thanks! The size is perfect but, unfortunately, it is not as flattering on me as it was on the half-Pinoy and half-Brit stunner who modeled it. This sexy super model is named **Jocelyn Oxlade**, and she is a scintillating stunner in her stretchy, streamlined Speedo suit.

Watching Jocelyn strut makes me understand why **Vicki Belo** has so many clients. As for me, the idea of having to reinvent my entire package is just too much work. Instead, I opt for enhancement via my designer outfits. My mainstay designer/yoga buddy **Rajo Laurel** has mastered the art of padding in the right places. It has worked perfectly for years.

ROSEANN Prieto poses for international photographer Rupert Jacinto for "New Work on Philippine Society" exhibit.

Exquisite photos

For the upcoming photo exhibit of highly acclaimed photographer **Rupert Jacinto**, I made sure he got the right angles and contours during our pictorial. A true artist, Rupert directs each subject in relation to the backdrop and comes up with exquisite photos.

The exhibit "New Work on Philippine Society" will be unveiled on March 29, at Fiamma along Jupiter Street, in Bel-Air, Makati. This event is produced by RPA People & Parties and is presented by Philip Stein watches, Qatar Airways and Cole Haan. The INQUIRER is a media partner.

Another renowned photographer recently concluded his own successful exhibit together with his brother. Dutch siblings **Alex** and **Han Van Hagen** presented a joint art series of landscape photographs and copper etchings to a chic cosmopolitan crowd. Titled "Van Hagen & Van Hagen, Brothers in Art," the well-loved artists' exhibit was warmly received by their numerous friends.

Alex told me that he decided to take photos of nature instead of people so he wouldn't have to deal with different personalities. His beautiful sunflowers reminded me of another famous Dutchman, **Vincent Van Gogh**!

Let me end with a special birthday wish for my favorite sister, **Sandy**. You've had a fantastic start to the year and I hope it continues throughout. Happy Birthday, Sandy!

E-mail the author at seaprincess@inquirer.com.ph.

Portable navigator

Nokia's new-generation technology makes finding one's way through a foreign country a breeze

By Anne A. Jambora

EXPLORE AND NAVIGATE A foreign city, tag photos, watch television, close business deals—digital convergence in one compact device. As today's technology-driven lifestyle increasingly demands mobility, it has also spawned a new paradigm of human behavior. Information on the go, real-time interaction—whenever, wherever.

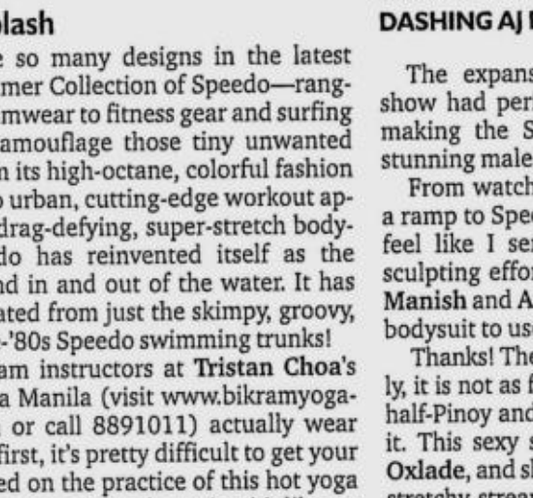
Nokia recently unveiled a new range of products and services that promises to transform how people use mobility in their private and professional lives.

There was a time, for instance, not too long ago, when TV viewing peak hours began during breakfast, dropped thereafter, peaked once more during dinnertime and slackened at bedtime. When the DVB-H-enabled Nokia N77 multimedia computer was put on a road-test, TV viewing no longer had downtimes. People actually had their phones tuned in to mobile TV broadcast the entire time, like they would when in their homes even if their attention was not entirely on it.

"People turn on the television just to have something playing in the background. The behavior, we learned, is the same for mobile TV," said Jawahar Kanjilal, director, multimedia experiences.

A surprise, in fact, was the mobile TV's usage at home, which ranked second to commuting. "The mobile phone has been transformed into consumers' personal TV that they stick with it even if they could watch their favorite programs on a much bigger screen," said José-Luis Martinez, VP for multimedia.

Services, of course, will vary from country to country, and from one service provider to the other. Although mobile TV has been in its infantile stage for quite some time now,



NOKIA E61i

Nokia predicts its mobile TV market to reach five to 10 million units by end of 2008, and around 20 million units the following year.

Location-based service is finally answered through the Nokia 6110 Navigator. Time to trash those oversized paper maps. The Nokia 6110 Navigator functions like the TomTom car navigator system, only better. The navigator is right smack inside the mobile phone, and will take consumers wherever they want—on foot or on wheels, using voice or visual instructions on a map.

Never be lost in a foreign city again. View current and exact location on a map, search for destinations, find specific routes, and locate nearby services such as restaurants, hotels, theaters or shops. Friends can't reach you? Forward your location or save it in your phone should you wish to revisit a place.

Simple, relevant content

"As always, Nokia addresses the simplicity issue and local relevance of the contents. The navigation experience is only the beginning," said Nokia VP for mobile phones sales and market operations Alex Lambeek.

Local maps, such as Metro Manila, for instance, are preloaded into the phone upon purchase. Additional maps, especially useful when traveling abroad, are available on DVD (separate purchase).

"It is the mission of mobile phones to built great talking and texting phones before building around a new dimension of experience into that," said Matt Rothschild, product and marketing portfolio management. Tagging photos, for example, is now made possible. The Navigator records the time, location and date photos were taken.

The Nokia 6110 Navigator has 2.4" widescreen display with up to 16 million colors, high-quality stereo sound, alerts when programs are starting and a guide to view program information for up to seven days. Users can also browse TV channels as they would a normal TV, or purchase new channels for a more personalized touch.

The surge of popularity of Internet video content has also helped shape the Nokia Video Center, an apps that brings all sources of mobile video. YouTube and Reuters are among the first global partners to this service that combines branded video services, Internet videos and sideloaded videos from the PC in one single place.

Business solutions are now made easier and compelling, with added security features. Three feature-packed and design-rich devices with 3G and Wireless LAN technologies, plus a flexible S60 software platform, are fashioned to enhance the mobile work experience. All are equipped with high-quality cameras.

For business professionals, the Nokia ESeries lineup consist of the slim Nokia E61i e-mail-enabled device; the design-forward Nokia E65 slider; and the Nokia E90 Communicator that evolved from the legendary communicator into the all-new inclusive business device with advanced technologies such as HSDPA and integrated GPS.

"Security is always a prime concern for business users. The ESeries has lock and wipe feature where you can erase all the data in your device remotely should it get stolen," said Mathia Nalappan, VP for enterprise solutions.

Nokia also launched the Nokia Intellisync Mobile Suite 8.0 mobileware. The suite provides mobile e-mail, mobile file and data synchronization and robust security, and device management capabilities to the ESeries products and more than 100 other products, providing the most extensive support in the industry so far.

And what is Nokia's take on the much talked about iPhone?

"I think the big debate really is will there ever be a single device when it comes to music and business use," said Nalappan. "The iPhone is Apple's first phone. They still have a long way to go. I personally think it leaves a lot to be desired, and I haven't even gotten into device management yet."

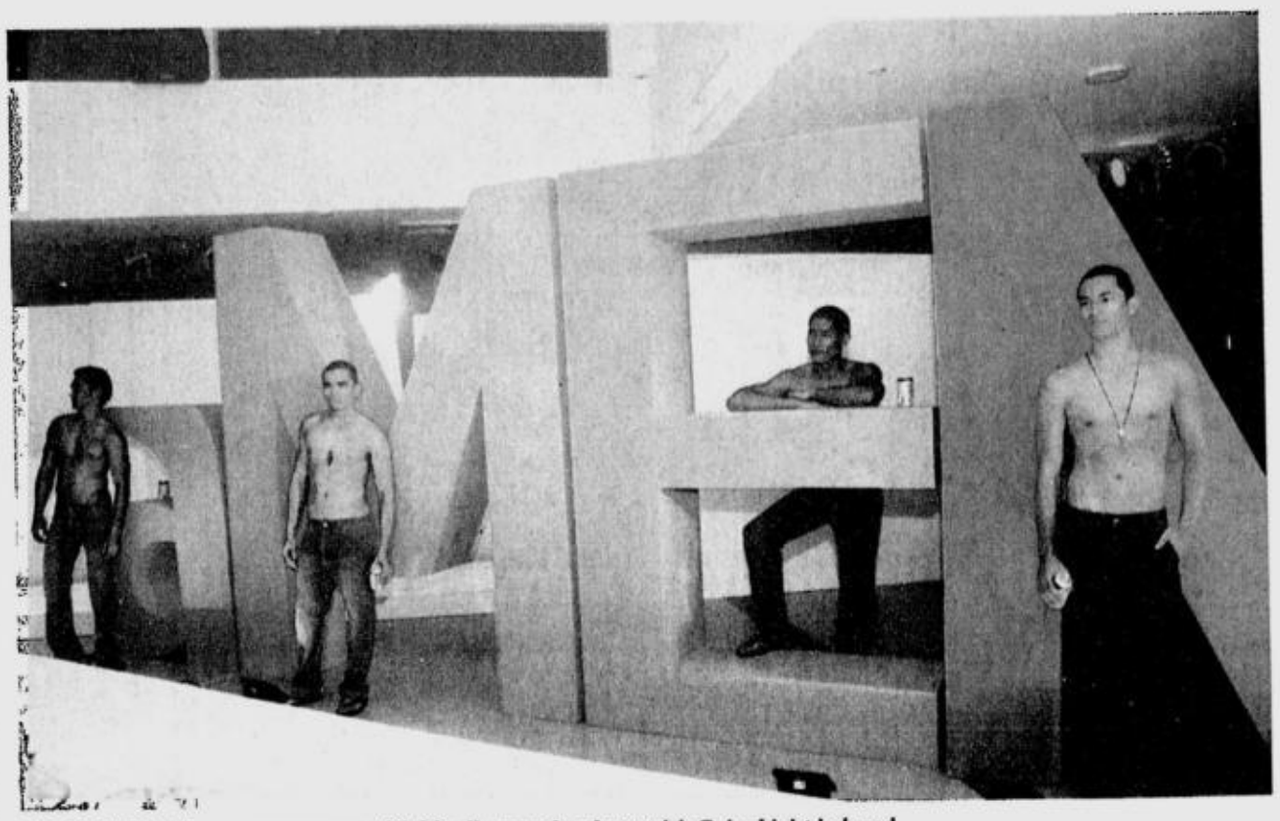
E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

NOKIA 6110 Navigator

NOKIA E90

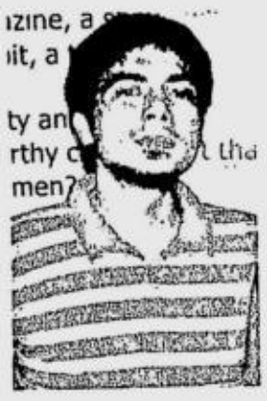
GOOD friends Crissan Olives-Celdran, Judith Berenguer-Testa and Kat Tuason

REAL MEN. Luke Jickain, Dom Mendoza, Michael Bejar and John Lopez



GREAT ABS. The gorgeous men of "aMen" open the show with Coke Light in hand.

BOYS' night out, no curfew. Models Paolo Paraiso, Robbie Mananquil and Joevince Canizares



BAMBOO'S Ira Cruz

Having It All

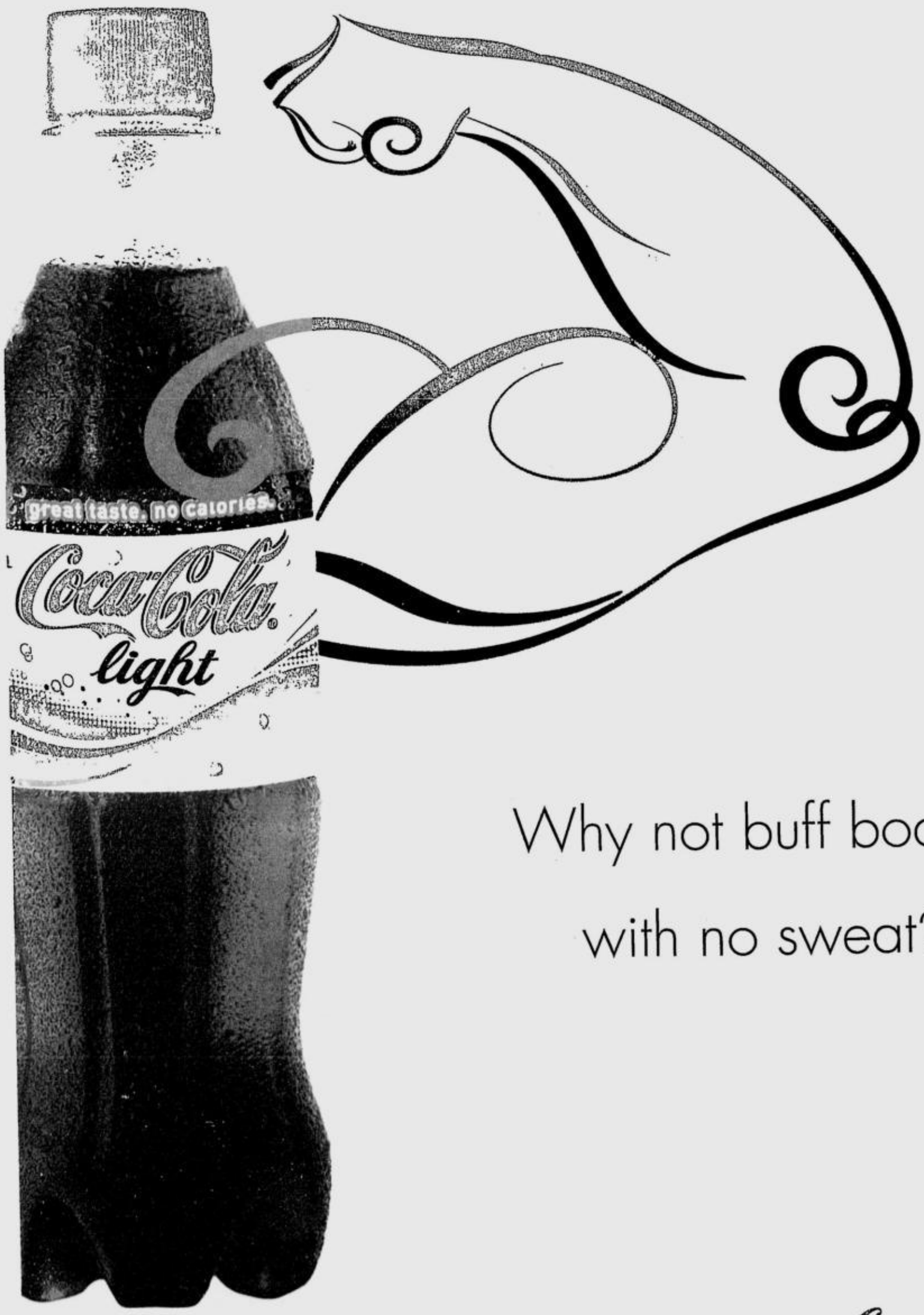
Some people want to live life on their own terms, get what they want, without any hassle. And who wouldn't? Imagine a buff body without having to work out. Or wearing those sexy four-inch stilettos without pinched toes and painful feet! Life would be so much better! In fact, it would be just like Coke Light-- all the great taste you love, and none of the calories you don't. You can have as much as you want without any worries!

In an alternate world where you could really have it all: there would be stolen kisses without getting slapped. You could shoot from the half-court line and not miss. Enjoy romantic movie without cheesy lines, and eat cheese popcorn without getting yellow fingers. You could enjoy the best of everything without any consequences.

Well perhaps you can't always get what you want. But you can definitely have it all with Coke Light. All pleasure, no guilt. This you can be sure of.

So grab a Coke Light now. It's the first step to having it all.

great taste. no calories.



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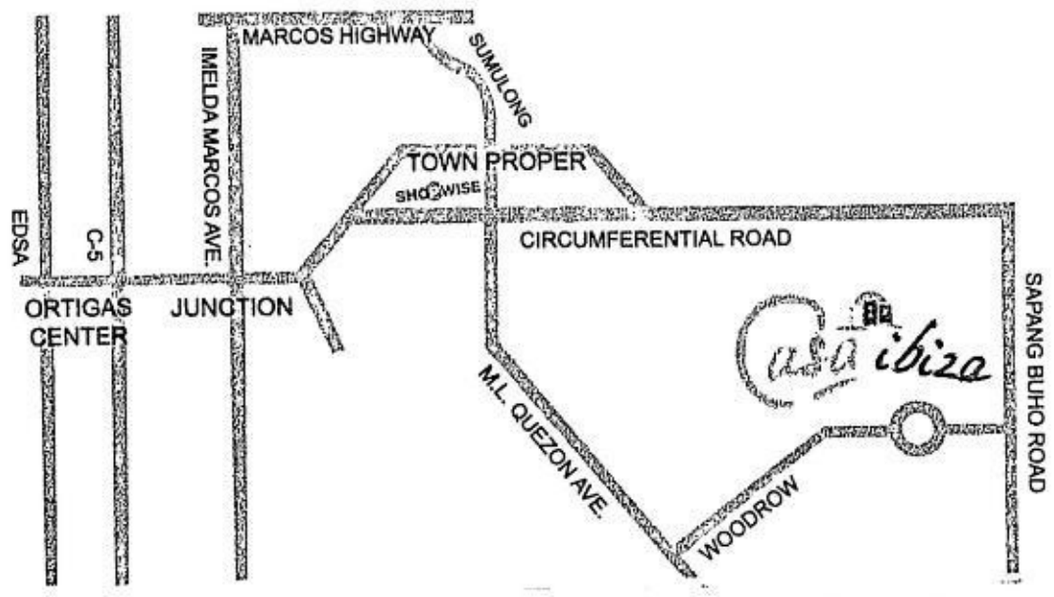

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SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2007

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Last confession

By Gilda Cordero-Fernando

My lolo said, Don't go to confession. The Katipunan was betrayed by a woman who confessed to a priest. –SMV

DURING THE ALUMNAE homecoming I met up again with my kindergarten pals Remy and Ludy. They were part of a gaggle of cute old ladies in tiger-stripe blouses (my contemporaries) asking the priest whether the Mass he had just said would be good for Sunday or would they have to go again tomorrow. They were still bargaining with heaven, it made me nostalgic. It sounded like I was back in good old alma mater all right.

Remy said that the week before, she had made a "general confession" (a term I had not heard in decades!) to a kind Italian priest. She recommended it highly, would I like one myself, and I said, oh, yes! Without at all knowing why. You will have to remember all the sins you committed since you made your first confession, Remy said. (When I was seven?) And she described how clean and light she felt after having been shriven. No, the general confession had not been difficult, not difficult at all.

I suppose I wanted to belong. I wanted to reconnect to my scrupulous childhood that had planted all those seeds of guilt in my heart.

Three circles

My first grade teacher, a nun, would draw those three circles (that looked like pancakes) on the blackboard to represent "the soul." The first pancake she surrounded with rays, as of the sun, to illustrate "a soul in sanctifying grace." Into the next circle she drew polka dots to represent "venial sins" that dirtied up one's soul but that could be wiped clean by sincere confession to a priest. The last circle was unrelievedly black. "The soul," she explained mournfully, "of a soul in mortal sin!" Mortal sin ranged from not going to Mass on Sunday to killing a human being. (It did not yet include rape since we were only 6 and had no idea that pants and skirts hid different things.)

Remy said she was so relieved that the priest didn't even get angry or scold her. (I thought maybe it was because Remy was 79 and the Italian, 60.) He did not even give her any penance—no rosaries, acts of mortification, litanies or ejaculations (heavens, no!). And Remy thought she'd be doing penance the rest of her life! (I began to wonder if Remy had poisoned her husband; she was a widow.) Before leaving, Remy was told that if she remembered any other sin, she was to consider that erased, too. (I guess the priest didn't want anyone coming back for a second round.)

My other classmate, Ludy, who had also gone for a general confession had, in fact, been tipped off that if she started a novena on Good Friday, and on the ninth day went to confession and received Holy Communion, she would not have to pass purgatory. Ever! I was impressed. It seemed to me, though, like some clandestine trade in indulgences except that miserly Ludy had not even passed the priest a single cent.

I began to remember, too, the nun telling us kids that if a murderer was genuinely sorry for his dastardly deed but confessed his sin immediately to a bona fide priest, and died (even by

LAST/ E4

So why did I, a 'free thinker,' come to confession? I told the priest: 'Because I wanted to find out if maybe there's now room for people like me in heaven'

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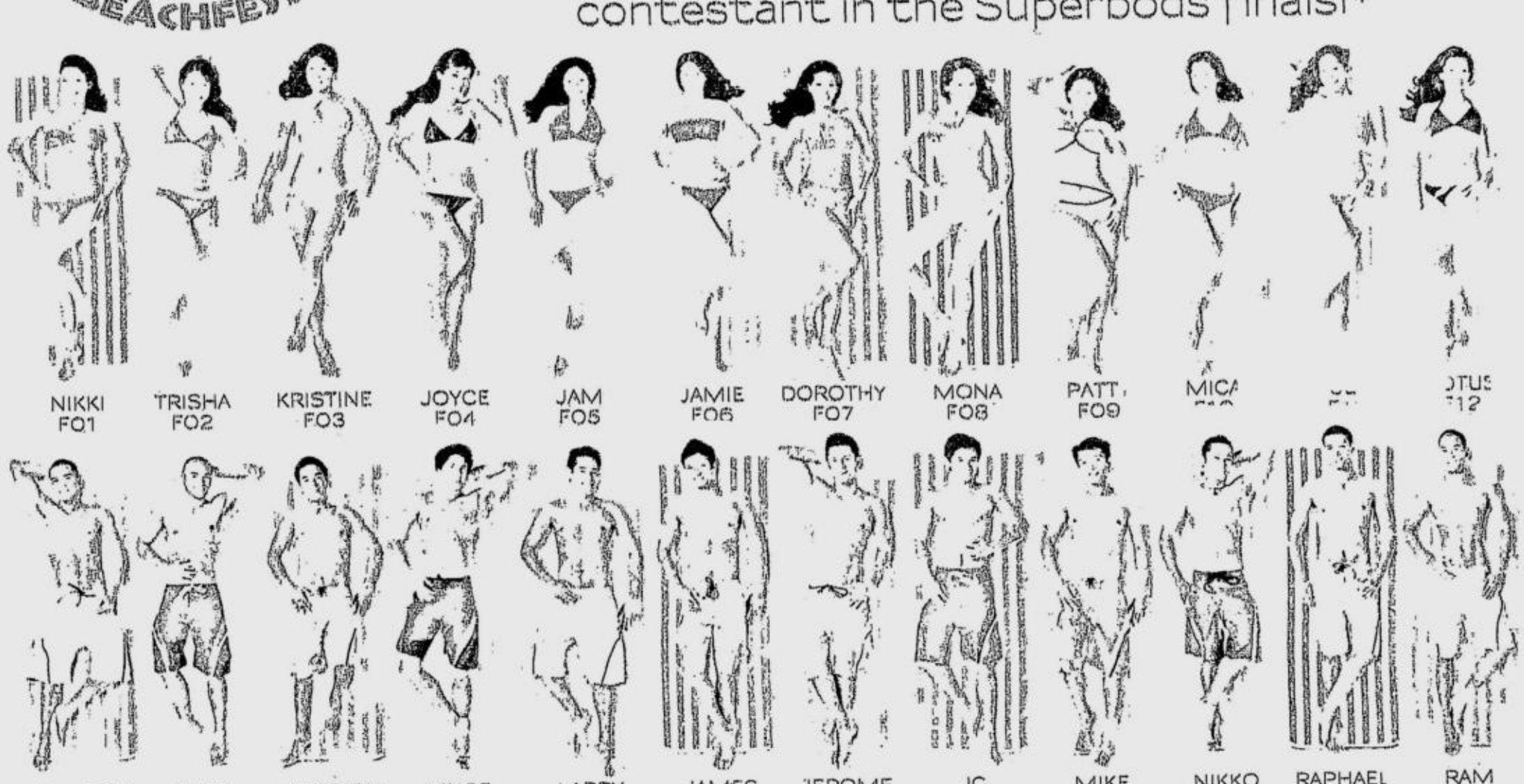

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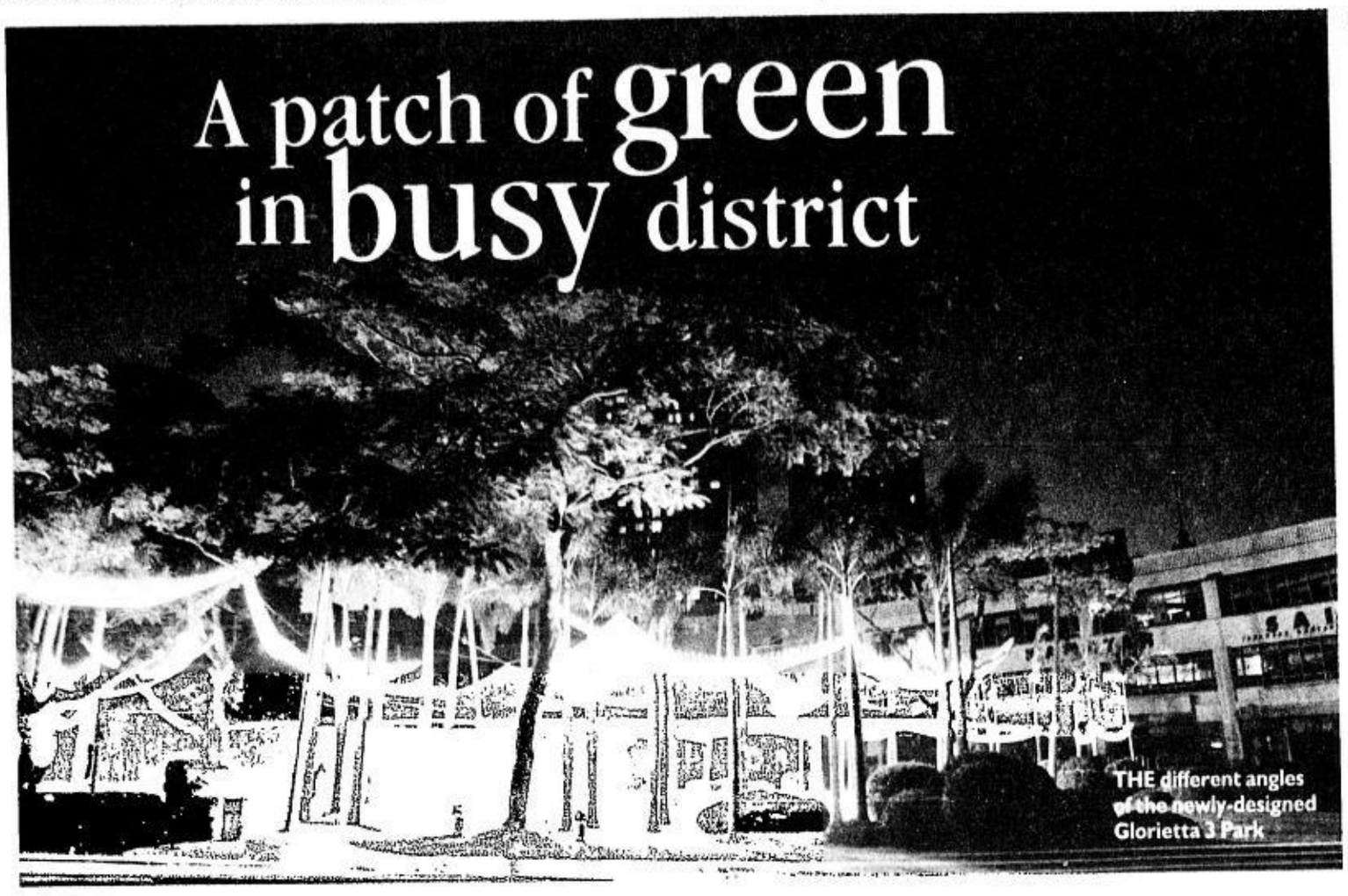
A patch of green in busy district



THE different angles of the newly-designed Glorietta 3 Park

A GRANITE paver kid holding a shell located in the newly designed Glorietta 3 Park

THE NEW GLORIETTA 3 PARK IS DEFINITEly not an ordinary park. The soothing green space is a sight to behold for shoppers, passersby and tourists checked into the hotels found in Makati's commercial and business district.

Ayala Malls, which owns and operates the Glorietta complex of mall, has long made greenery an indispensable feature of its urban development.

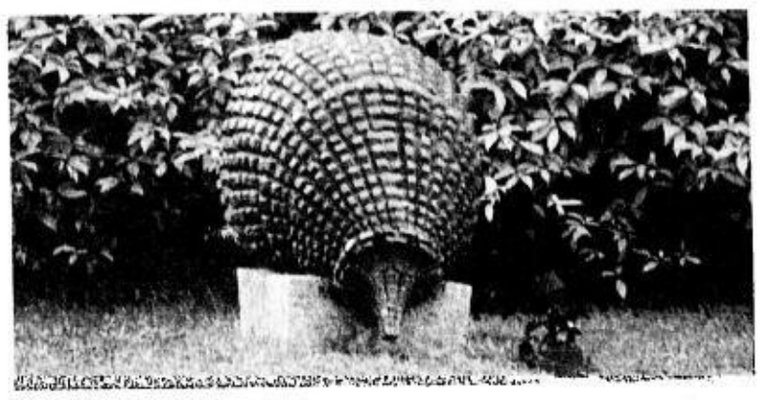
With the recent redesign of the Glorietta 3 park, Ayala Malls has created a multipurpose convergence zone where young urbanites and office workers can take refuge from the hustle and bustle of the city.

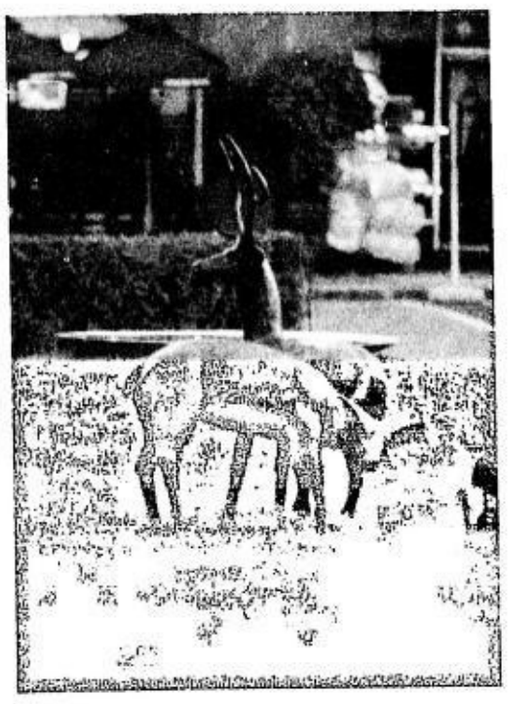
Designed as a refreshing retreat from the frenetic pace of the metropolis, the cozy, ecocentric space is dotted with tree-lined walkways, enchanting pocket gardens and a new water fountain.

Whimsical sculptures of forest creatures that seem to come straight out of fairy tales are placed among a variety of eye-catching plants—topiary, foxtail palms, Fukien tea bushes, Alexander palms, white thumbergias, dwarf *kamuning*, and podocarpi—that combine to create a peaceful atmosphere.

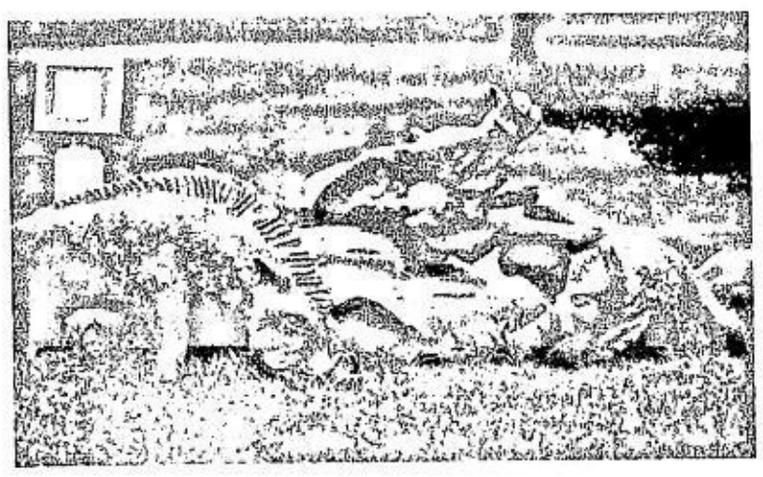
An expansive wooden terrace at the corner of North Drive and Office Drive at the park's east end will house a UCC Coffee Café. Visitors to the park can now unwind in the al fresco terrace deck, enjoying a fresh cup of coffee or a light snack.

A tent right by the park may be a perfect venue for lifestyle events and performances. The canopied activity area features a new tensile structure that can accommodate up to 500 people.





FOREST animal granite pavers help accentuate the Glorietta 3 Park

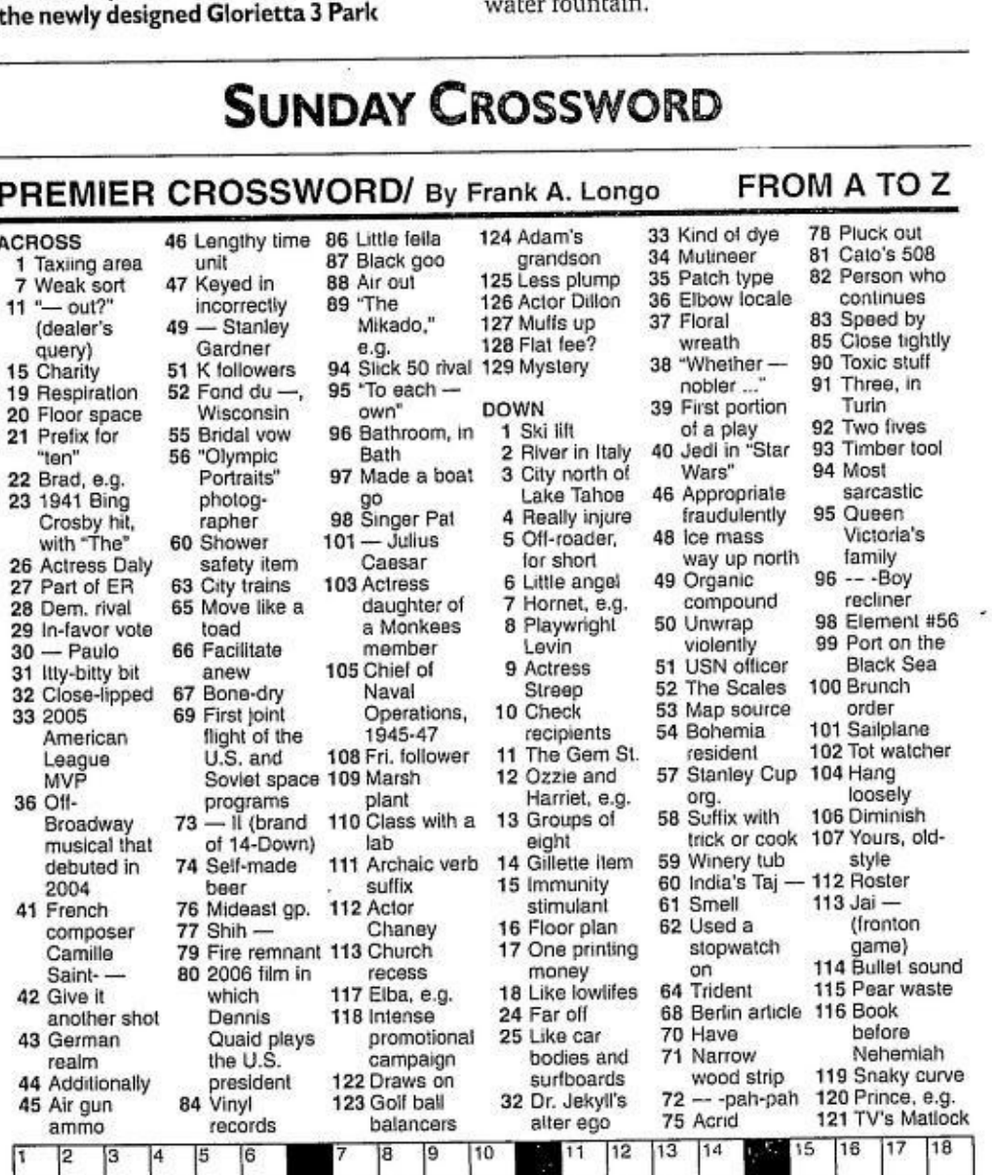


SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — **FROM A TO Z**

ACROSS
1 Taxiing area
7 Weak sort
11 "— out?" (dealer's query)
15 Charity
19 Respiration
20 Floor space
21 Prefix for "ten"
22 Brad, e.g.
23 1941 Bing Crosby hit, with "The"
26 Actress Daly
27 Part of ER
28 Dem. rival
29 In-favor vote
30 — Paulo
31 Itty-bitty bit
32 Close-lipped
33 2005 American League MVP
36 Off-Broadway musical that debuted in 2004
41 French composer Camille Saint- —
42 Give it another shot
43 German realm
44 Additionally
45 Air gun ammo
46 Lengthy time unit
47 Keyed in incorrectly
49 — Stanley Gardner
51 K followers
52 Fond du —, Wisconsin
55 Bridal vow
56 "Olympic Portraits" photographer
60 Shower safety item
63 City trains
65 Move like a toad
66 Facilitate anew
67 Bone-dry
69 First joint flight of the U.S. and Soviet space programs
73 — II (brand of 14-Down)
74 Self-made beer
76 Mideast gp.
77 Shih —
79 Fire remnant
80 2006 film in which Dennis Quaid plays the U.S. president
84 Vinyl records
86 Little fella
87 Black goo
88 Air out
89 "The Mikado," e.g.
94 Slick 50 rival
95 "To each — own"
96 Bathroom, in Bath
97 Made a boat go
98 Singer Pat
101 — Julius Caesar
103 Actress daughter of a Monkees member
105 Chief of Naval Operations, 1945-47
108 Fri. follower
109 Marsh plant
110 Class with a lab
111 Archaic verb suffix
112 Actor Chaney
113 Church recess
117 Elba, e.g.
118 Intense promotional campaign
122 Draws on
123 Golf ball balancers
124 Adam's grandson
125 Less plump
126 Actor Dillon
127 Muffs up
128 Flat fee?
129 Mystery

DOWN
1 Ski lift
2 River in Italy
3 City north of Lake Tahoe
4 Really injure
5 Off-roader, for short
6 Little angel
7 Hornet, e.g.
8 Playwright Levin
9 Actress Streep
10 Check recipients
11 The Gem St.
12 Ozzie and Harriet, e.g.
13 Groups of eight
14 Gillette item
15 Immunity stimulant
16 Floor plan
17 One printing money
18 Like lowlifes
24 Far off
25 Like car bodies and surfboards
32 Dr. Jekyll's alter ego
33 Kind of dye
34 Mutineer
35 Patch type
36 Elbow locale
37 Floral wreath
38 "Whether — nobler ..."
39 First portion of a play
40 Jedi in "Star Wars"
46 Appropriate fraudulently
48 Ice mass way up north
49 Organic compound
50 Unwrap violently
51 USN officer
52 The Scales
53 Map source
54 Bohemia resident
57 Stanley Cup org.
58 Suffix with trick or cook
59 Winery tub
60 India's Taj —
61 Smell
62 Used a stopwatch on
64 Trident
68 Berlin article
70 Have
71 Narrow wood strip
72 — -pah-pah
75 Acrid
78 Pluck out
81 Cato's 508
82 Person who continues
83 Speed by
85 Close tightly
90 Toxic stuff
91 Three, in Turin
92 Two fives
93 Timber tool
94 Most sarcastic
95 Queen Victoria's family
96 — -Boy recliner
98 Element #56
99 Port on the Black Sea
100 Brunch order
101 Sailplane
102 Tot watcher
104 Hang loosely
106 Diminish
107 Yours, old-style
112 Roster
113 Jai — (fronton game)
114 Bullet sound
115 Pear waste
116 Book before Nehemiah
119 Snaky curve
120 Prince, e.g.
121 TV's Matlock



answer on page G4

Bora's newest luxury resort opens

DISCOVERY SHORES, WHICH AIMS to become the most prestigious address in Boracay, finally opens its doors on Tuesday, March 20.

Guests can expect to experience modern tropical luxury amid lush greenery and the ultimate pampering in any of the 40 suites initially available.

Budji Layug + Royal Pineda Architecture Planning and Interior Design designed the suites to integrate sleek and elegant styling with Boracay's natural beauty.

Early birds can enjoy the special soft opening room rates beginning at US$210 for two persons. Applicable taxes will be added.

The package includes breakfast for two, welcome drink, fresh fruits in the room, and transfer from Caticlan airport. Children seven years old and below who will share the room with their parents are free of charge. An additional US$30++, inclusive of breakfast, will be charged every extra guest in the room.

The Sands Restaurant, Discovery Shores' elegant dining outlet, also opens to offer guests gourmet cuisine inspired by the lively flavors and colors of the tropics.

Owned and developed by The Discovery Leisure Company, Discovery Shores will have a total of 88 luxurious guest rooms and the world-class Discovery Mandala Spa once it is fully operational. Also set to open are the Sandbar beach bar, pool bar, library, and Sandbox kiddie lounge.

Discovery Shores, managed by HSAI-Raintree, is a member of the exclusive Small Luxury Hotels of the World (Manila office: 6832222 local 3929 and 6838392, fax 6839895; Boracay: 6336-2884500; VOIP: 632-7208888, fax 6336-2884505, 632-7205555; and discoveryshoresboracay.com).

APRIL pleasures: For those looking forward to a Holy Week vacation, Pan Pacific Manila offers its "April Serenity" promo. Guests can choose between the Local Residents Rate, valid for the whole month or the Holy Week Special, from April 1-8. Rate for a Superior Room with the Holy Week Special is P500 off the regular local residents rate or as low as P4,000+ while a suite is priced at P6,900+. A suite room during the Holy Week entitles guests to a free ticket to the Easter Sunday activity at the Poolside. Call 5360788 for details.

TRAVEL BRIEFS

Airline marks first year in RP

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, is celebrating this month the first anniversary of its Manila service. Juan Torres, country manager for Etihad Airways in the Philippines, said the country was one of the most promising aviation markets in Asia for the airline. During the past year, Etihad Airways achieved several milestones in the Philippines, the most notable being the unveiling of its Boeing 777-300ER in April. It features Etihad's pearl zone (business class) award-winning seat that received The World's Leading Flat-bed Seat at the 2006 World Travel Awards. In October, Etihad Airways introduced a brand-new menu. Etihad flies non-stop to and from Manila four times a week. Call 8858433 to 35 or visit www.etihadairways.com.

Filipinos now in Top 10 of Singapore arrivals

The Philippines is now among the top 10 countries of origin of Singapore tourist arrivals. Rocson Chang, area director for Philippines and Brunei of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) said there are some 385,960 Filipinos visiting in 2006. Chang said putting the Philippines on the Top 10 was achieved two years ahead of the STB-Philippines target date, 2008. The 2006 figure is more than twice the recorded Filipino visitors in Singapore in 2003, 176,574. The year 2004 saw the biggest increase in the number of Filipino visitors, 40 percent for a total of 245,914. In 2005, the number rose by 30.12 percent for a total of 319,971. Filipinos are also the longest-staying visitors in Singapore, averaging over six full days in the Lion City. Call 8134968 or 8130946.

Wine and dine while waiting for your flight

Travelers with plenty of time to spare before their flights may want to visit Travel Lounge just a few minutes away from the international and domestic airports. Operated by the Travel Cooperative of the Philippines (TCP), the place's specialties include Paella Marinara, Crispy Turo, Callos à la Madrileña, Gambas al Ajillo and Tapa de Baka. Those who want to have wine with their meal can rely on Robert Lim Joseph and Johnny Midnight, the men behind Travel Lounge, to make sure that they get the appropriate beverage for their meal. Joseph, chair of Philippine Wine Merchants and the wine chain Ralph's Wines and Spirits, is even willing to give a crash course in wine appreciation for interested diners. Travel Lounge, set up to provide services available in an airline's Business Class lounge, is geared primarily to the needs of *balikbayan* tourists and other travelers. It offers Thai massage, a bar and online services. The third and fourth floors will soon offer accommodations to TCP members and guests. Travel Lounge is at 2253 RLJ Compound, Tramo Road, Pasay.

TOYS FOR YOUNG TRAVELERS
Emirates launched a new line of children's toys on long-haul flights at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, the airline's partner hotel for crew accommodations. The toys come in one of two must-have bags: a colorful rucksack (on flights outbound from Dubai) and a cool bag (on inbound flights). Each one comes in five different color combinations. Among the new toys is Querk, which comes in a soft fabric bag with one of five costumes: Salaam the Lion, Yorkie the Eagle, Sydney the Koala, Paris the Rabbit or Delhi the Elephant. Querk also comes in the form of a glove puppet for babies and toddlers. During the launch, kids also tried Emirate's latest children's menu prepared by MacroAsia, the airline's catering partner.

STAR CRUISES, one of the leading luxury cruise liners in the Asian region, recently held a one-day product update seminar for officers and members of the National Association of Independent Travel Agencies chapters from Northern Luzon Area, at the Travel Lounge along Tramo, Pasay. Present were Marlene Pajanel, (second from right), Starcruises senior sales and marketing manager for Philippines and Guam; Baguio Chapter president Cathy de la Rosa; National president Angel Ramos Bognot; and Wilma Mann of Lipi (La Union, Ilocos Sur, Pangasinan and Ilocos Norte) chapter.

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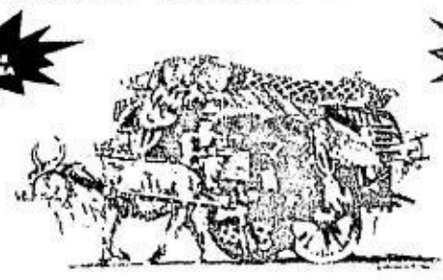

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Last confession

From page E1

electrocution), he would go straight to heaven! In Grade I they were always using murderers as examples maybe because we knew no murderers and couldn't dispute anything, certainly not the affront to one's sense of justice.

Not sorry

I wondered, the moment I got home, what I would say in my general confession. That I did not feel sorry about anything I'd done in my life and that there was not a thing I'd like to change? Because that was the truth. My transgressions I had tried to understand. I had suffered their backlash because it hurt me to find out what kind of a lousy person I still was, but even more because they had hurt other people. I had already atoned for most of them with the people concerned. The rest (mostly relationships) I was still grappling with and trying to accept as best I could. I felt that pitfalls were necessary in one's journey through life—they had made me suffer and learn. Isn't that what makes us grow? From being ashamed of our bad deeds? Did I have to burden a poor priest with that? I began to regret making an appointment for a general confession.

How could I, for instance, explain why I had not gone to Mass or confession for something like 30 years—and not once regretted it? Didn't that mean that for the same number of years I had not been a Catholic? (Nor a Protestant nor a Buddhist nor a Muslim.) Aren't people like me what were called by the nuns "free thinkers," condemned to hell in the august company of heretics like Voltaire?

Why should a murderer going to confession get better treatment than me?

Two different things

I remember the day, several decades ago, when I realized that "being spiritual" or being a good person had nothing to do with religion, that spirituality and religiosity were two different things. Searching for my truth could not be done, in fact, within the folds of any religion.

That day, I went to a book fair and, for purely literary reasons, bought a Bible from a Catholic booth. As I was leaving, I was proffered a freebie, a pamphlet on Medjugorje and I said, "No thanks, I am not a Catholic." I was horrified at my refusal. It was the first time I had publicly verbalized my stand. I was agitated. Surely a pack of little demons was hanging on to my skirt and back and I kept looking behind.

That night I went into a deep, deep meditation. I was surprised to find myself asking God if I was still okay in his book. The panoramic image that opened in my mind was of enormous male and female genitalia copulating, much like the earth and sky in primitive myths. At first it startled me but I did not find it blasphemous. Watching the divine act of Love, in fact, made me feel reverential—what is creation, after all, but the greatest act of love? If the symbol seemed crude to a prudish mind, well, in my limited world, sex was a personal heaven.

I felt a warm and protecting love physically enwrap me. I wanted to peer over my shoulder to see if there was indeed a giant magnificent creature embracing me. I felt infinitely loved.

God and I had found each other again, but no longer in other people's terms, just God's and mine. God didn't even have to be a "he" written with a capital letter.

Knowing God

In subsequent meditations I got to know God in a deeper way. God is me, the higher me. He is my blood, she is my bones, he is my flesh, she is my organs. He is my eyes and my ears and my nose and my mouth. She is my shoulder blades and my breasts and my womb.

God is imagination. God is inspiration. God is all the heady colors that flood the sunset, the blush on the soles of a baby's feet.

God is the energy to fly, to leap, to dance, to create. God is, as well, simply to be.

God is the goodness in every human being whether it is in the heart of an enemy or a friend. God is the stranger who gets off his vehicle in a storm to see how he can help me with my stalled car.

God is the rich and poor trying to understand each other. God is the rich and poor liking each other.

God is the sky, the clouds, the seas, the clean rivers, the mountains and the plains, the air that I breathe. God is the rice I eat and the fruits that I suck, the cows on the wayside and the birds that I watch.

God is everything and everyone and everything is God.

God is a warm hug. God is passion. God is sex.

God is learning how to love. God is friendships. God is the solidarity of women taking care of one another, of men taking care of other men, of women and men taking care of one another.

God is one's husband, nice children and a house filled with art. God is ballroom dancing. God is a green salad and maybe a slice of pizza.

When I came out with that meditation in a small article, I really got it. A pious friend said that God being the sky and the clouds and the rain was "pantheism." Someone said I was a "polytheist." Another admitted that God is everything but maybe not the cows and the ballroom dancing and the pizza pie! She made it sound so ridiculous.

I realized that the way people neutralize anything they are not comfortable with is to give it a label. Your painting must be a Picasso, your poetry Edgar Allan Poe, your leaning Marxist. To a scholarly religious, I must be an agnostic, a Manichean, a monophosite, a Calvinist, a Zwinglian, a Quaker, a Christian scientist or a Saksi ni Jehovah. It reminded me of a lot of good folks labeled "masamang tao" by other good people who discovered that they did not go to Mass.

And we had not even gotten to that quaky creation part yet! Creation is the one attribute of God that human beings share. Artists, painters, singers, composers, dancers, writers practiced it all the time. Does that not mean that we are pieces of God? If you are a piece of God, then what are you?

Believe

Blasphemous? To believe that one is God enough to be able to create something beautiful out of the chaos that is our sad land today, to dream to life a society that will care for the earth. If we believed we owned the power.

And I see it all around me. Human beings who create great things out of nothing. When they began, when they were interviewed, they were asked, what resources do you have? And they all inevitably answered, *Wala*! Zero! But many years later you realize they have created communities, built houses for the poor, established schools, care centers, working programs for livelihood and environment saving, created art and drama and dance and song. Out of nothing! *Wala*!

People create when they are willing to see other options, when they are ready to break boxes and challenge institutions, are not afraid to buck what is accepted and safe. Growth is a special and very painful process. A quote goes: Moonlight floods the whole sky from horizon to horizon; how much of it can fill your room depends on how wide you open your windows.

All said and done

When all was said and done, the priest asked, So why did you come here? And I replied, Because I wanted to find out if things had changed, if maybe there is now room in heaven for people like me.

He smiled and ignored the question. And gave me absolution anyway. If you die tonight, the holy man said, you will go straight to heaven. I said I believed him.

Promise me you will receive Holy Communion tomorrow, he said. I never make promises I can't keep, I said. I told him I admired the way their religious order carried out their mission, what tremendous good it had done for the Filipinos.

Then receive Holy Communion tomorrow, he said. Do it for me.

Why should I? I said.

God bless you then, he said, opening his breviary.

You, too, I said, sincerely, and blew the nice old priest a kiss.

"The Last Full Moon" (UP Press) won the National Book Award for "Best Biography." It is available at Fully Booked, PowerBooks Greenbelt 4, Megamall and Alabang; National Bookstore Shangri-La, Greenhills, Glorietta 1, Greenbelt 1, Podium and Alabang; Popular Bookstore QC; Solidaridad Bookstore Padre Faura; Datelines in Cubao Shoe Expo and lately in A Different Bookstore. all branches.

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By the Staff

HOW IMPORTANT ARE FITTING ROOMS? Going by readers' feedback after we came out with "How's this for size" (Sunday Lifestyle March 11, 2007), the first installment of our assessment of fitting rooms in different malls, they are very important.

One reader wrote: "I was ecstatically happy to read your review of the fitting rooms of top shops in the metro. It's about time retailers get their act together on this one. I, too, feel shortchanged and dismayed when I try clothes on and find store spaces cramped, with poor lighting, broken locks/no locks, chairs, uncourteous staff, etcetera."

Big department stores are likewise guilty of gross negligence when it comes to fitting rooms. Having shopped in most of them, we thought it was likewise time to give them an eye-opener. Many of the fitting rooms at these one-stop shops are an embarrassment, especially for a country that is desperately scrambling for tourists. But more than the tourists, Filipino shoppers themselves deserve better.

Rustan's in Gateway Mall

Like its other branches, Rustan's Gateway maintains total cleanliness outside and inside of the store. Fitting rooms are discreetly spread all over the store. The rooms are clean, well maintained and ready for use. Some rooms even have a metal stool or a cushioned chair for tired shoppers.

Rustan's Makati

This is proof that you get what you pay for. Save for a rare encounter with a lone candy-bar wrapper, Rustan's fitting rooms are kept tidy. Hooks are where they're expected to be, plus there's a cushioned chair to sit on. Even better, the rooms have real doors with real locks. Makes you safe from running into strangers in the middle of your wardrobe change.

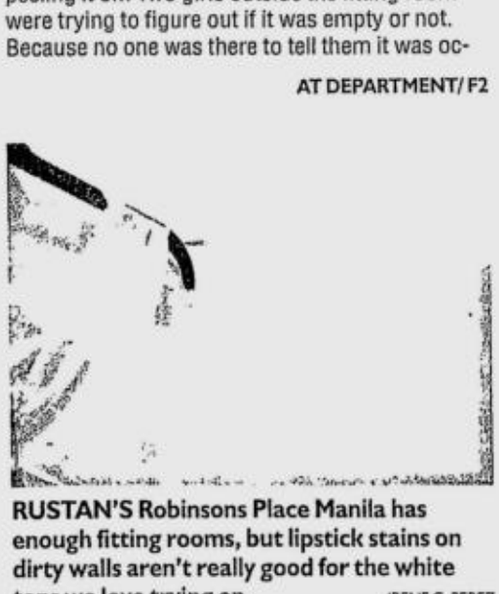
Rustan's in Robinsons Place Manila

Rooms are average in size and the staff isn't the friendliest. A particular cubicle has lipstick stains on the walls, which could ruin an outfit. Lighting is dim and doesn't help much if you're particular about the silhouette of a dress.

Robinson Department Store (RDS) in Galleria

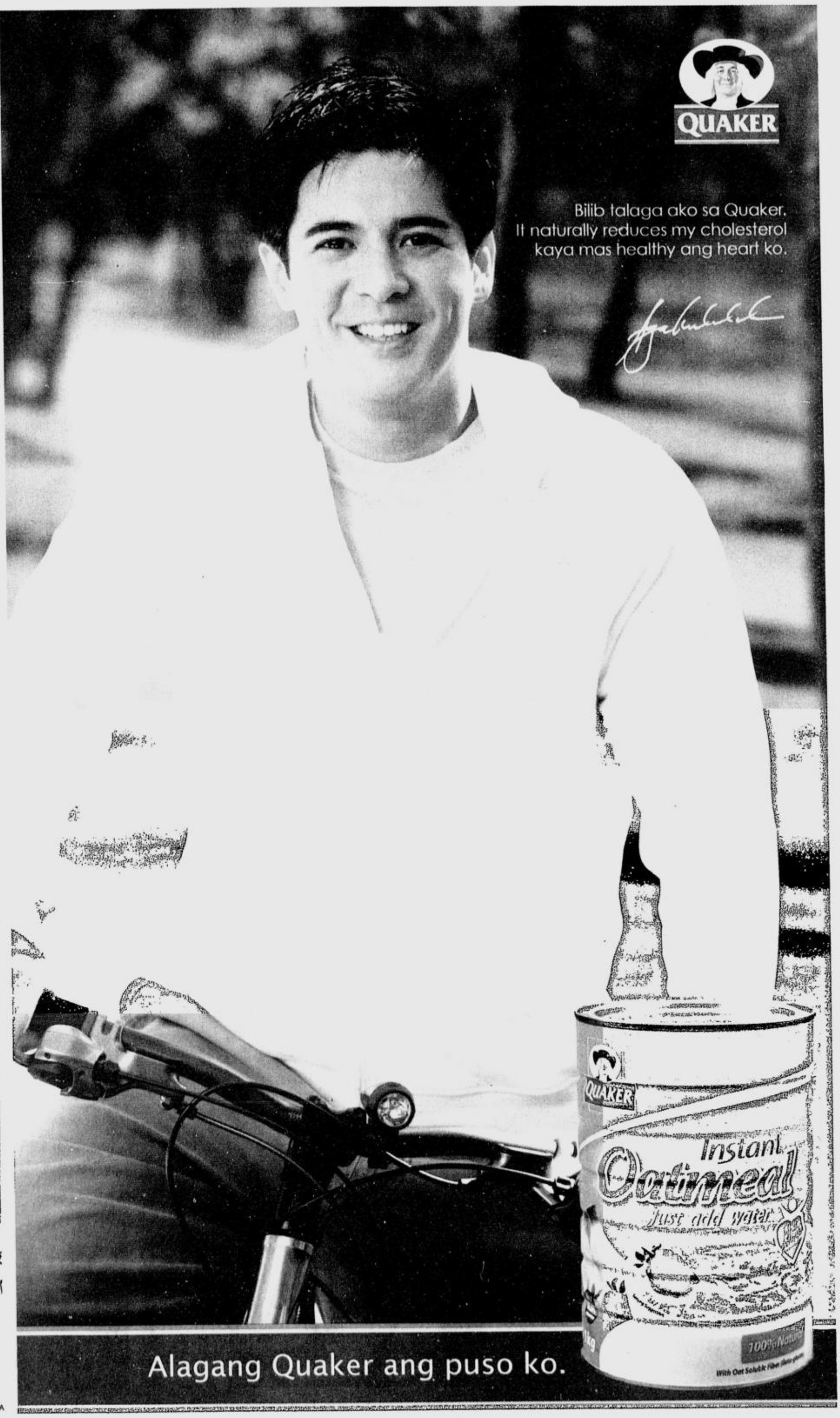
A single fitting room (more like a glorified box, really) hidden in one corner near the Bench area was cramped, the carpet worn out, the curtains tattered and the hook, practically falling off. Someone brilliant had decided to rip one of those hygienic liners off a bathing suit bottom and stuck it to the wall—and no one has thought of peeling it off. Two girls outside the fitting room were trying to figure out if it was empty or not. Because no one was there to tell them it was oc-

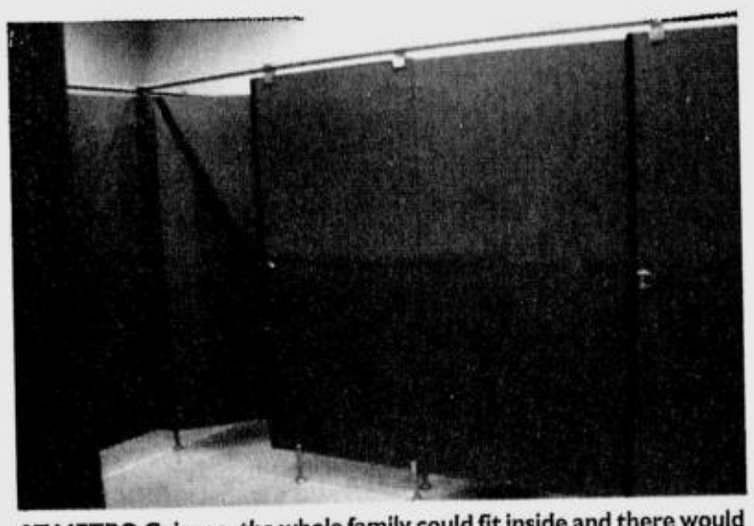
AT DEPARTMENT/ F2



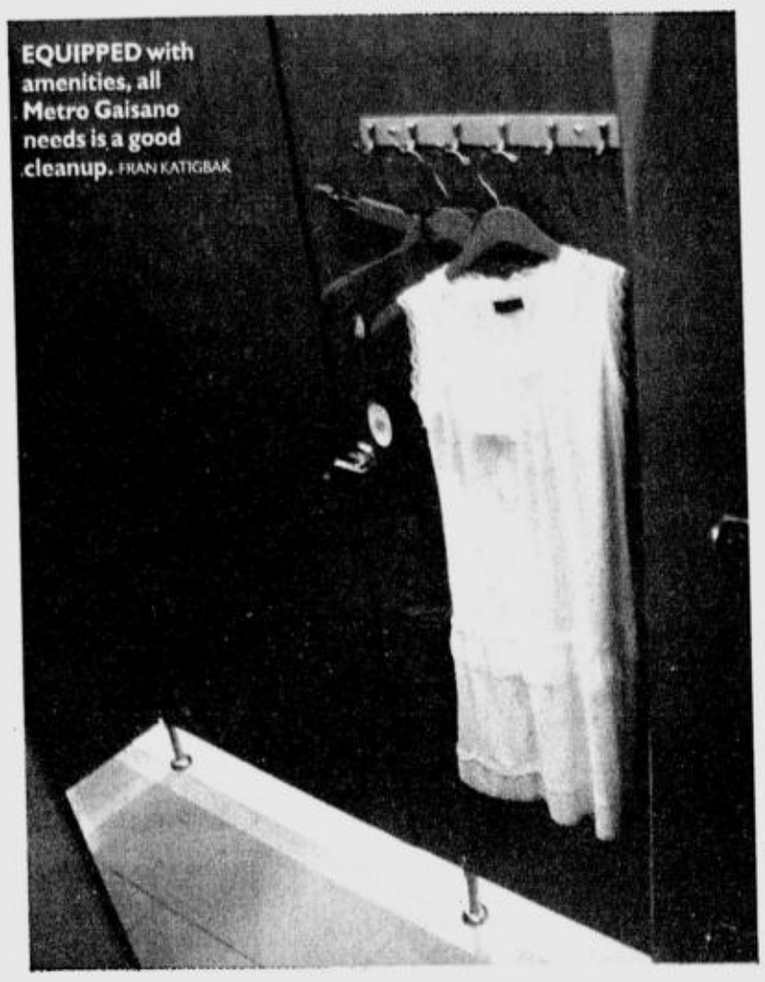
RUSTAN'S Robinsons Place Manila has enough fitting rooms, but lipstick stains on dirty walls aren't really good for the white tops we love trying on. IRENE C. PEREZ

LANDMARK. The biggest turn-offs are scotch-taped signs and hooks (it escapes us what for) outside each door. AMY I. RAÑOLA





AT METRO Gaisano, the whole family could fit inside and there would still be plenty of room to spare! FRAN KATIGBAK



EQUIPPED with amenities, all Metro Gaisano needs is a good cleanup. FRAN KATIGBAK

Department stores

	SM North Edsa	SM Mall of Asia	Metro Gaisano	Rustan's Makati	Robinson's Place Manila	SM Megamall	SM Makati 3rd level	Crossings	SM Manila	Robinsons Gallerla	Landmark
Size	***	***	*****	*****	**	***	**	****	**	*	**
Cleanliness—absence of clutter, etc.	*	*	***	****	**	*	***	***	*	**	*
Basic amenities—hooks, shelf, locks	*	*	******	****	**	***	**	****	*	**	***
Mirror and lighting	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	**	**
Quantity	*	***	*****	***	**	***	***	***	*	*	***
Service	*	****	***	*****	**	**	***	****	*	*	*

At department stores, you get what you pay for

From page F1

cupied, the girls thought it would be a good idea to hit the side of the fitting room to see if someone would react. The fitting room shook with their force. It was time to get out of there.

RDS at Robinsons Place Manila

The number of fitting rooms is definitely not enough for the sheer number of mall rats who love trying on clothes. The walls and floors are dingy. Most salespersons don't even bother finding out if there are available sizes ("all out *na* ma'am" all the time) and the locks are bad.

SM in Manila

Fitting rooms in the ladies' wear section are locked. You have to ask the clerk armed with keys to open the room. On our visit, she sheepishly said it was part of the mall's security measures. But such setup must spell big-time inconvenience, sale or no sale, for shoppers. The weirdest thing about SM, aside from locked fitting rooms, of course, is there are some rooms with no mirrors inside! You have to try on the clothes, then step out to look at the mirror. Cleanliness is also very compromised. The floors are dirty, with one particular cubicle hosting a mini-puddle of water. Rooms usually have two hooks on both walls, which should be enough if you abide by the three-garment only rule. But since salespersons are lenient, you can practically smuggle 10 items in.

SM Makati

With 18 stalls on the third level (ladies' wear section), there seems to be enough dressing rooms here. We don't know, though, if that's a sufficient number during sales. This branch is new, so the stalls are clean and well lighted. A major pain is having to step out of the stall to look at yourself in the mirrors located outside.

SM in Mall of Asia

Everything about the MOA is huge, except the department store fitting rooms which are tacky and filthy. The gap below the door reveals too much activity inside. All mirrors hang outside the cubicles, forcing the customer to step out to see and (horrors!) be seen by others. It's a shame to have a mall of such scale act small.

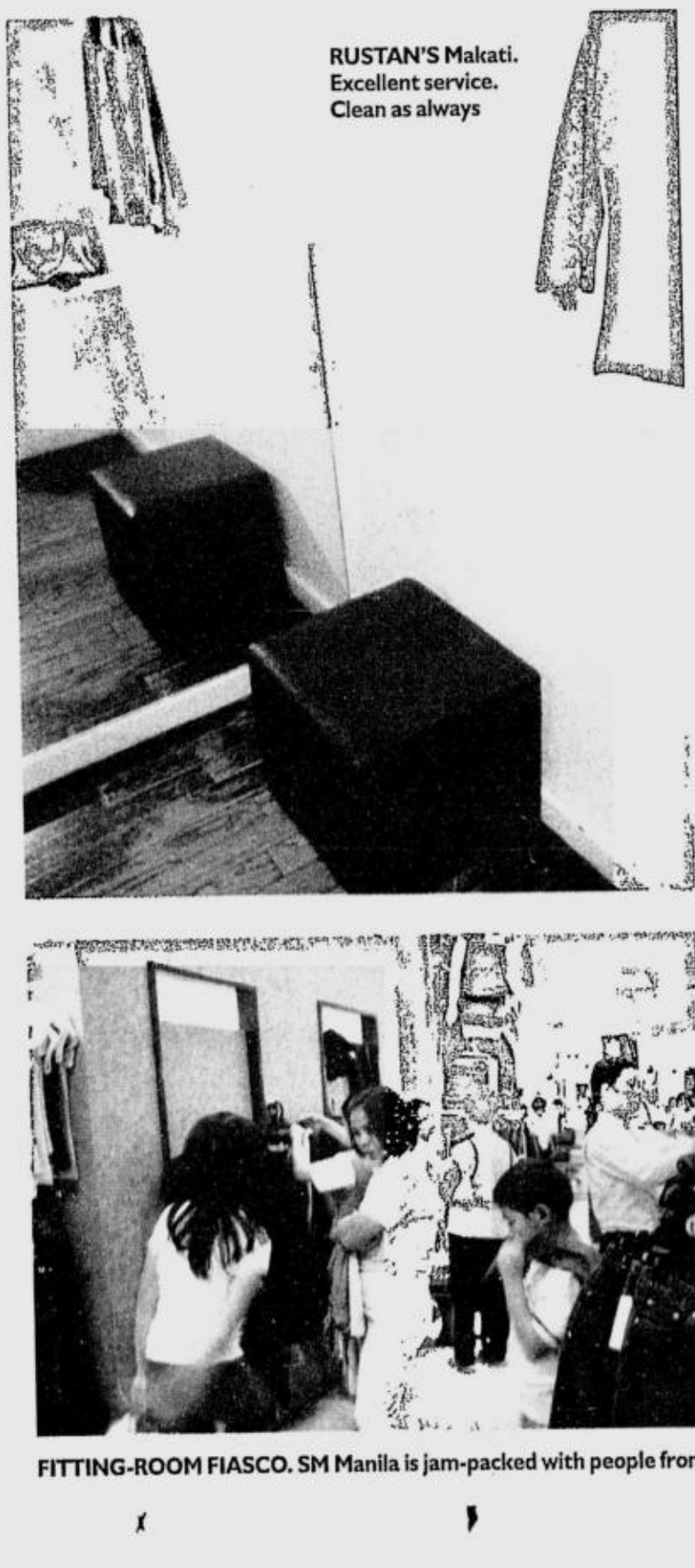
SM in Megamall

The floor was dirty, with strands of hair, clothes tag and a piece of crumpled paper. Good thing there were two hooks, one for the merchandise and another for our bag. There were seven fitting rooms for clothes, five for formal wear, and another four for underwear. Those for clothes were not enough to accommodate their many shoppers. It is inconvenient when shoppers have to be led to other fitting rooms, especially so when the salesclerks only point you to the direction of the fitting area.

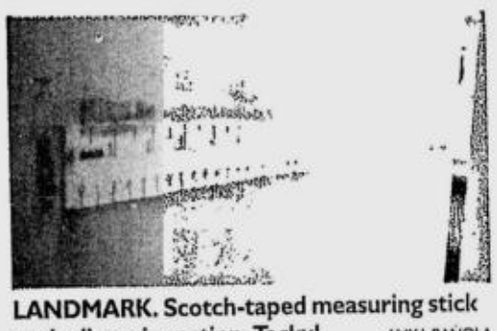
SM at North EDSA

Even with numerous stalls on the third level of SM Department store (including freestanding shops like Jag, Lee and Levi's), there seems to be enough fitting rooms here to accommodate shoppers. One can find a dressing room almost anywhere in the ladies' section. But the bigger question is cleanliness. All four stalls located in the ladies' wear section of the store are grimy and with dirty floors. Hangers, crumpled paper, plastic bags litter the floor. The salesclerk on duty isn't always there to give you personalized service, perhaps because there are too many shoppers who are in to take advantage of the special promotions for the month.

AN unusual scene at an SM department store: Almost empty dressing rooms in the Makati branch ANNE JAMBORA



RUSTAN'S Makati. Excellent service. Clean as always



LANDMARK. Scotch-taped measuring stick at the lingerie section. Tacky! AMY I. RAÑOLA

Crossings Department Store

Two lights, a long bar, a big mirror, two hooks, gray curtains, a comfy seat. The fitting rooms at Crossings pretty much give shoppers everything they need.

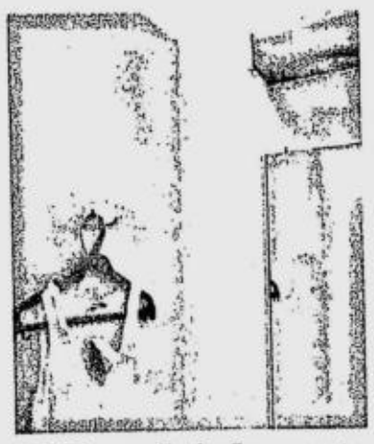
Landmark Department Store

The dirty-white paint of the interiors doesn't help this department store look, er, clean. Its fitting rooms basically had the same look. In one room, the door had pencil marks all over, the lock was rusting, and the walls had traces of duct tapes stripped off. The biggest turn-offs are scotch-taped signs ("Please fall in line"; "No fitting of whites") and hooks (it escapes us what for) outside each door. The fitting rooms were generally small and pretty dim inside since most of the rooms only shared lighting from the shopping area. In order to properly see how the items looked, we had to step outside for better lighting and better view from the mirror, for everyone to see.

Metro Gaisano Mall

The whole family could fit inside and there would still be plenty of room to spare! Seriously. In the cubicle next to ours, we heard mom, auntie No. 1, auntie No. 2 and little sis debating whether *ate*'s party dress was conservative enough. Rooms are equipped with amenities, but could improve on cleanliness.

ONE of free-standing fitting rooms at MOA's department store FRAN KATIGBAK



DARK room. Faulty fluorescent light at SM Megamall AMY I. RAÑOLA

LANDMARK. Where do all these marks come from? AMY I. RAÑOLA

FITTING-ROOM FIASCO. SM Manila is jam-packed with people from senior citizens to infants in strollers. Think last-minute Christmas shopping, only worse on this particular Sunday. IRENE C. PEREZ

EMILY'S POST
Emily Marcelo

Traumatized by mestizo in-laws

DEAR EMILY,

It has been said that if the father is the foundation of the home and the mother is the light of the home, in-laws are the termites of the house.

Funny but true in my case. My in-laws were so cruel and mean to me that my brain couldn't seem to shake off my traumatic memories of them!

When I married my husband 13 years ago, we had no choice but to live with his parents and his four siblings. My husband is mestizo and *guapo* while I look very ordinary—small and brown-skinned.

We were classmates in college and got engaged after graduation. My husband and I lived with his family for 12 years. I saw cheating and greediness first hand.

One time, I thought there was a brownout in the house. I didn't realize power was shut off because they removed their Meralco "jumper" during a surprise inspection.

When one of us got sick and needed someone to watch over us in the hospital for a few hours, we had to pay my mother-in-law to do it.

My in-laws considered me so ugly that my father-in-law wouldn't tell his visitors who I was. My mother-in-law was no different. When my son had an assignment in school and asked her if she had a picture of an Aeta, she told him to just take a picture of me!

All those years, my in-laws never showed affection or thoughtfulness to my kids like they did to their other grandchildren who were all fair-skinned like them.

But their worst offense was throwing us out on the street every time they argued with my husband. Our life finally improved when my husband was assigned abroad and brought us along.

My problem is there is so much hate in me. I hate myself for letting it all happen. I hate myself for not fighting back when the situation called for it. I hate my husband's family and he knows it. He doesn't call them at all. I hate myself for not telling them that they treated me unfairly, unjustly.

They took away my self-confidence, my self-esteem. I don't know how to let go of the pain, the anxiety, the grudges.

And in spite of everything, they even have the gall to ask us for monthly financial assistance now!

How can I heal me?

HELP

Remember there are always two sides to everything. Always. You may have been oppressed by the names hurled at you and felt every bitter sensation in the fibers of your body—but you became a stronger, bolder, more insightful and compassionate person because of these very terrible people.

They made your spine flexible and enduring. Unbeknownst to you, these were the very elements that pushed you to seek a better life.

In the final tally, the plusses outweigh the negative things. After the tears and the heartaches and headaches, you actually emerged with enough training and ammunition to face the world. And it only took you 12 years to learn—not a lifetime!

To err is human, to forgive divine. Clearly, being divine is farthest from your mind at this time, but that's ok. You're still being hard on yourself only because you've not been away that long for the pain of the oppression inflicted on you by these people to ease.

Give it time. No amount of writing or talking or sulking can erase the seconds and minutes, hours, days, months and years you've endured from these "termites."

The moment will come when the people and the torments they caused will become just memories—not even causing pain to you anymore. Your whole past may even be built on jokes about them.

Open wide your mind and allow the sunshine of new ideas, breathtaking sights, and wonderful new people to come in and erase your bitter memories. Life is short. Don't make it any shorter.

E-mail the author at emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to INQUIRER. Listen to Ms Marcelo co-host the program "Kalikasan Vigilante," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dwBR 104.3 FM.

'But their worst offense was throwing us out on the street every time they argued with my husband'

Towns nominations now open

NOMINATIONS FOR TOWNS SEARCH 2007 are now being accepted.

Nominees may come from government, academe, business and civil society. Qualified are Filipino women aged 21-45 who have excelled in their chosen field and have contributed to the development of their field of expertise. They should not be older than 45 years old on July 31.

Individuals, clubs and organizations may submit nominations to Towns Secretariat and to Museo Pambata Foundation Inc. Nomination forms may be downloaded at www.towns.org.ph. The secretariat's numbers are 8331125 and 8315196; e-mail townsimelda@yahoo.com. Museo Pambata's numbers are 5231797-98; fax 5221246; or e-mail nlyuson@museopambata.org.

Founded in 1974 by the late Governor Manuel G. Aliño of Lions Club International MD 301, Towns has so far honored 128 Filipino women in communications, arts, law, public administration, diplomatic affairs, humanities, advocacy, public service, cultural integration, rural development, community development, medicine, research, nursing, economics, business entrepreneurship and tourism.

Nominees are evaluated based on personal, career and other relevant measures of accomplishment.

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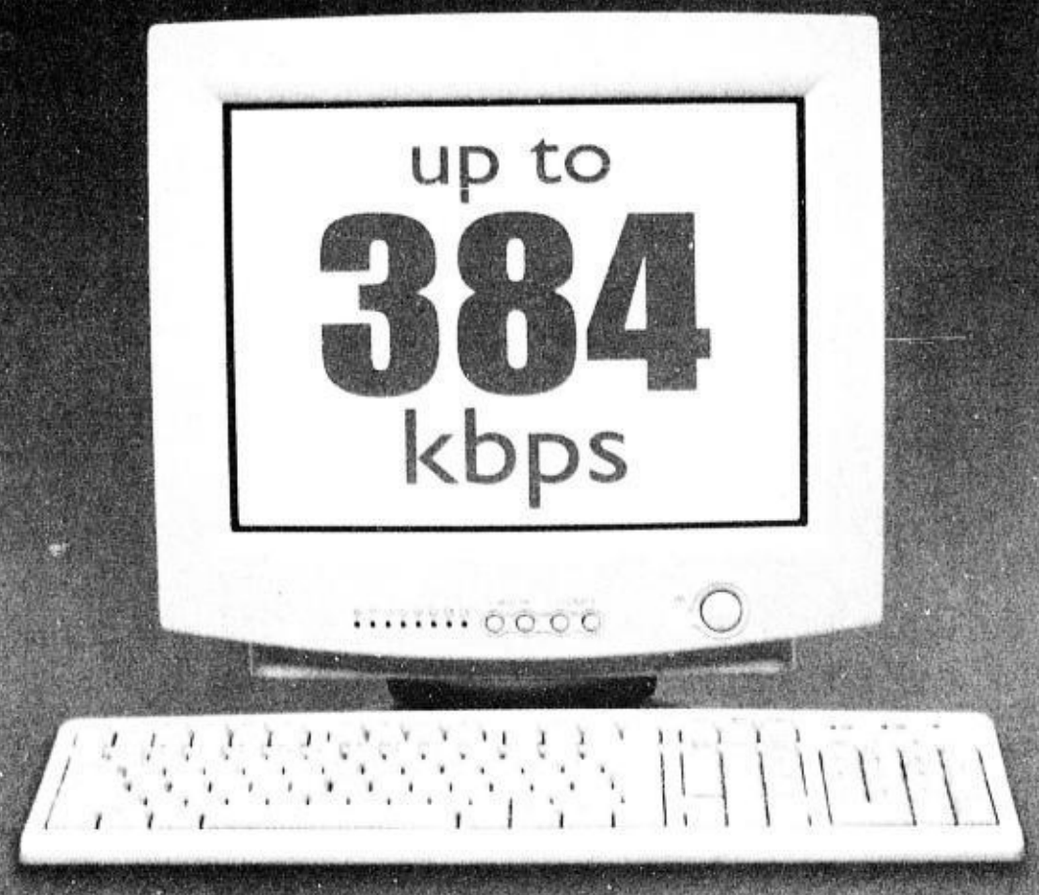

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Sunday LIFESTYLE

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Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the INQUIRER, P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.

UY-CO

Kelly Uy, son of **Adolf** and **Rosita Uy** , will marry **Sarah Jane Co**, daughter of **Teresita Harve Co**, today at the Santuario de San Jose.

The bride will wear a **Leonard Co** all-white metallic organdy gown with pleated off-shoulder sleeves embroidered in fine ferns and beaded with sand crystal beads and Swarovski stones.

CHAN-ACABADO

Richard Chan, son of **Ricardo** (deceased) and **Avelina (nee Perey) Chan**, will wed **Precila Acabado**, daughter of **Pablo** (deceased) and **Imelda (nee Orencillo) Acabado**, on April 21 at the Chapel of the Holy Child, Fort Bonifacio.

LADERAS-GIL

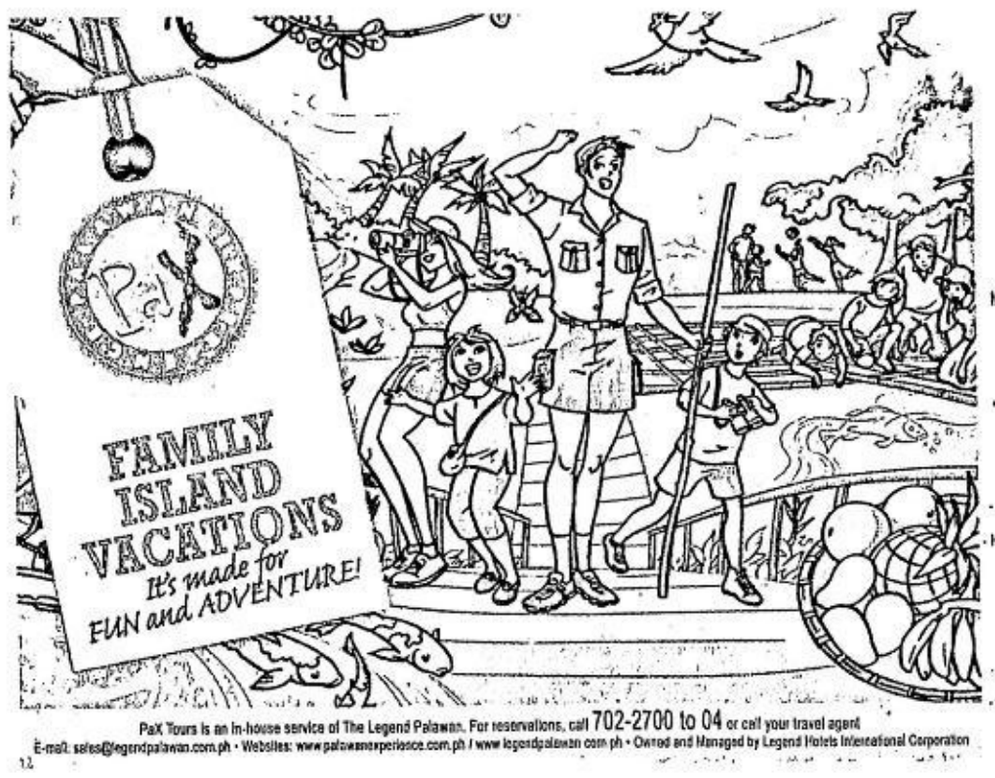
Lloyd Laderas and **Penny Gil** will exchange vows on March 29 at the Shrine of Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life. Reception will follow at Coconut Palace.

SALAZAR-DE LEON

Engineer **Pual S. Salazar**, son of Dr. **Cecilio** (deceased) and **Marcela Salazar**, wed recently **Leoda C. de Leon**, daughter of **Bernardo de Leon** and **Leonora Cangco**, at the St. Joseph Bamboo Organ Church in Las Piñas City. Reception was held at St. Joseph Mini park. The bridal gown was designed by **Ole Morabe.**

ACOSTA DEBUT

Jane Kathleen T. Acosta celebrated her 18th birthday yesterday at the Mambo Bar/Restaurant, 1680 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila.



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Merger breathes new life into direct-selling campaign

PABLO Perez, managing director of Fuller Life Direct Selling

By Pam Pastor

THINK OF IT AS MARRIAGE made in direct-selling heaven.

Sara Lee Direct Selling and Tupperware Brands Corp., two global direct-selling giants, recently merged and are now known as Fuller Life Direct Selling Philippines, Inc.

This year marks Sara Lee's 14th year and, for Pablo Perez, managing director of Fuller Life Direct Selling, this is only the start of better things.

"Change is good. The good life just got better. We are taking Sara Lee Direct Selling to the next level. This is an opportunity for better earning for more and more Filipinos and their families," he said. "Expect a stronger, more caring, more relevant direct-selling company and the beginning of better and more exciting possibilities for our customers and sales force."

Sara Lee has been one of the world's largest direct-selling companies for years. From 850,000 Sara Lee dealers, Fuller Life and Tupperware now have 1.7 million trained direct sellers in 46 countries.

Perez says of Fuller Life dealers in the country: "They're not good; they're remarkable."

Perez promises a lot of incentives that Fuller Life dealers can look forward to. There is, among others, the Loyalty Advantage Bonus which allows registered dealers to accumulate rewards points and exchange them for prizes and special promos.

Goodbye,

Sara Lee.

Hello,

Fuller Life

Dealers who sign up as independent business managers (IBMs) are in for bigger treats. Top-selling IBMs get to enjoy all-expense paid trips inside and outside the country. There's even a free vehicle plan that will give high-performing dealers the choice of the latest car models.

Products available through Fuller Life Direct Selling include underwear, shirts and baby clothing from Hanes; sportswear from Champion; push-up bras from Wonderbra and Playtex; baby products from Zwitsal; and Nutrimetic skincare line.

"Expect more passion in the way we do business," Perez says. "We'll take things from good to better and fuller."

Call the toll free number 1-800-10-FULLER1 (1-800-10-3855771).

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

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Ultra-moder

LIZA MARINAS, A CIVIL ENGINEER TURNED-traveler and entrepreneur, wanted a makeover of the living room in their old Marikina home.

With the help of Real Living Magazine and Handyman Do It Best Home Center, among other sponsors, Marinas breathed new life into the room.

A little rearranging, recycling and repainting made things better. Handyman's ultra-modern fully automated Paint Center (with quick-dry, odorless and exclusive Do it Best Select Paints) produced the exact colors needed.

The Paint Center has state-of-the-art database

SOLUTIONS for small spaces. The paint and five rectangular mirrors from Handyman give depth and space, and breathe new life into the Marinas' small living room.

SHABBY no more, after it was decluttered, repaint

CEBU CEBU
Jaime Picornell

Cebu Quotarians honor pioneering women

THE QUOTA INTERNATIONAL OF CEBU celebrated its Pearl Anniversary (30 years) at La Terraza of the Casino Español de Cebu.

Cristina Corominas, the current president, led the Quotarians in honoring five ladies who have been with the club from Day 1 back in 1977.

These are president emeritus and founder **Lydia Ibañez**; **Loreta Calderon**, current vice president for internal affairs; **Lourdes Garcia**, **Tomasa Rodriguez** and former president **Tita Oppus** who couldn't attend because of a fever. But Tita's little great-granddaughter **Ieia Valenzuela**, in the arms of club secretary **Evelyn Ramirez**, collected her plaque.

Guest of honor and speaker was Rep. **Carmen Cari** of Leyte's 5th district. She spoke about a bill she filed that will enable the less privileged to avail of PhilHealth benefits.

40 years of friendship

She said her friendship with **Tina Corominas** was more than 40 years, dating back to when they were students at the University of the East in Manila.

"We were classmates only once, in Physical Education," she said. But they kept in touch through the years.

Acknowledged were two visiting Quotarians—**Jenara Matugina Lewis** from Biloxi (Louisiana), and **Gina Ceballos** from Sydney (Australia) who gave the club a check for AUS$1,000.

The Quota Ladies will find good use for the donation. One of their important projects is paying the salaries of teacher-interpreters at the First High School for Hearing-impaired Children in Basak, Cebu City.

The ladies also maintain daycare centers in the densely populated city area of Sawang Calero, and the sometimes inaccessible mountain barangay of Guba.

The budget for daycare centers also includes feeding the children, salaries for social workers, and medical care when needed. Another daycare center will open at Talamban, Cebu City.

The Quotarians have been able to purchase land, and Rep. **Raul del Mar** promised to help with the construction.

Annual 'santacruzan'

The Cebu Quotarians get a major part of their funding through an annual *santacruzan*. This year it will be held May 5. The event starts with holy mass at 4:30 p.m. at Seminario de San Carlos in Mabolo. The procession that follows ends at the Cebu Grand Convention Center where the coronation rites will be held.

Connie Mapeso Garica, the club's VP for external affairs, is chair of Santacruzan 2007, a Philippine festival that commemorates the finding of the True Cross by Saint Helena, mother of Roman Emperor Constantine.

Schoolchildren from Lydia Ibañez's St. Benedict Childhood Education Center are tapped as participants. They sell raffle tickets and those with the highest sales get key roles in the Santacruzan.

Little girls vie for the title of Reina de los Angeles, teeners for Reina de las Flores, and elementary-level boys for Emperador Constantino. All other participants take roles as *zagalas* and *principes*.

More funds are raised from the thick souvenir program issued every year, and from donations by prominent ladies who are approached to complete the *dramatis personae* in the pageant.

This year **Lisa Torres** will come from Bangkok expressly for the purpose of being Reina Emperatriz. **Pamela Yamaoka** will be Reina del Santacruzan, while **Mytha Ann Canoy** will be Reina Elena.

Aside from Lydia, Tina, Loreta, Connie and Evelyn, full support is given by the rest of the officers who are in various committees. They are assistant secretary **Louella Abellana**, treasurers **Dulce Gantuangco** and **Linda Rana**, auditor **Marcia Godinez**, PRO **Pinky Shan**, past president **Jo Mapeso** and directors **Fely Gimarino**, **Sue Gray**, **Gasper Julia**, **Lourdes Manigos**, **Cecilia Raborar**, and **Ma. Luisa Veloso** who, as chair of the Pearl Anniversary, received due praise and congratulations for a memorable evening.

TREASURER Linda Rana and Dulce Gantuangco with Gina Ceballos from Sydney, and Quota Cebu president Tina Corominas

PEARL anniversary chair Ma. Luisa Veloso and St. Benedict's registrar Socorro Codilla

THIRTY years of loyalty awards for Loreta Calderon, Lourdes Garcia, president emeritus Lydia Ibañez and Tomasa Rodriguez

LISA Torres, Reina Emperatriz of Quota Cebu Santacruzan 2007

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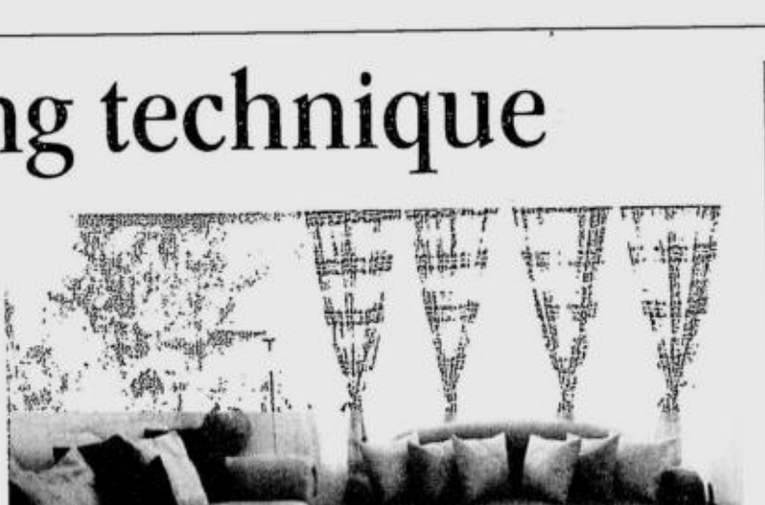

CIVIL engineer-turned-traveler entrepreneur Liza Marinas enjoys her cozy living room.

:d and revamped for a more updated chic character.

BEVERLY HILLS 6750, in partnership with INQUIRER and Smart telecoms, launches the first ever reality beauty makeover contest to be extensively covered by a newspaper. Seated from left is Dennis Leung, INQUIRER product manager; Mylene de Jesus, INQUIRER sales officer; Renato Reinoso, INQUIRER SVP-Sales and Marketing; David Bunevacz, Beverly Hills 6750 president; and Jessica Bunevacz, Beverly Hills 6750 marketing director. The contest dubbed "The Search for Ms Ugly (No More)" begins March 16 and can be read in the INQUIRER over the next 10 weeks.

Summer musical theater workshop in Cebu

VETERAN THEATER ARTIST MICHAEL Williams will once again be based in Cebu this summer to supervise the musical theater workshops at the Mango Avenue campus of the Sacred Heart School-Jesuit on April 16-May 6.

Organized by Little Boy Productions and the Sacred Heart School-Jesuit, the workshops aim to introduce kids to theater and the performing arts, develop their talents and foster teamwork, discipline, commitment and support, while making new friends along the way.

There will be two classes: Children's Musical Theater for kids 6-12 years old, and Musical Theater for Young Adults for those 13 years old and above. Both workshops run April 16-May 6, with daily sessions of three hours each Monday-Friday for three weeks, comprising acting, voice, and movement classes that will culminate in a presentation for family and friends at the Marcelo Fernan Theater on May 7.

Michael Williams was part of the original London cast of "Miss Saigon" and went on to play Lun Tha in the London revival of "The King and I." He is a resident actor of Repertory Philippines. He has appeared in over 100 plays and musicals such as "Les Miserables," "The King and I," "The Sound of Music," "Man of La Mancha" and "Cabaret." He has also directed many plays and musicals for Repertory Philippines, including "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change," which toured Cebu last year.

Workshop fee is P4,500. Call 2549320/4157068/0917-8155794 or visit The Secretariat at Exams Excellence, 3/F, Manros Plaza (across Fooda), Mango Avenue, Cebu City.

FR. LEOPOLDO Jaucian, bishop-elect of the Diocese of Bangued

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Darang

New Abra bishop; new UST Seminary rector

FR. LEOPOLDO CORPUZ JAUCIAN, provincial superior of the Society of the Divine Word, was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI as the new bishop of the diocese of Bangued, Abra last Jan. 5. He will be ordained bishop by Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales on March 26, 9 a.m., at the Shrine of the Divine Word in the Christ the King Seminary in Quezon City. He will be installed bishop on March 31, 9:30 a.m., by Bishop Ernesto Salgado the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia.

Jaucian replaces Bishop Artemio Rillera, who is now bishop of San Fernando, La Union. He became the seventh bishop from the Society of the Divine Word.

At 47, Fr. Jaucian will become one of the younger Philippine bishops.

When Leopoldo "Pol" Jaucian was born on July 27, 1960 in Santa, Ilocos Sur to Ernesto Ballesteros Jaucian Sr. and Veronica Bello Corpuz, *Nana* Greta, the midwife, was heard to have remarked that the baby had a bald spot on the top of his head. In Ilocano, she said that the baby might become a bishop.

While growing up, the boy Pol would attend Mass at the Divine Word Academy where he was a high-school student. His family was so poor that his father Ernesto worked at one time as a fisherman in Santa town; a sugarcane tenant farmer in Victoria, Tarlac; then a janitor at the Divine Word Formation Center in Urdaneta, Pangasinan.

In the meantime, the seed of vocation had been planted in the young Pol. He took the bus to Manila after high school to apply as a full-time sacristan at the Christ the King Mission Seminary in QC. Thinking that only the rich could only become priests, he asked God for a sign saying that if he were hired as a sacristan, it would be a sign that he would eventually enroll as a seminarian.. Fr. Michael Padua, SVD hired him on Aug. 1, 1976.

MSGR. Hernando Coronel, PWU chaplain

Fr. GERARD Francisco Timoner III, OP, UST Central Seminary rector

Seminary studies

When he enrolled for his Philosophy studies in the seminary as a working student, the late Fr. Victor Bagsic, SVD told him that God would provide. And God indeed provided when American sponsors sent money for his studies.

After his novitiate in Tagaytay in 1982, he went to Taiwan to study the Chinese language. In 1987, he finished his theological studies in Taiwan. Bishop Miguel Cinches, SVD, ordained him priest on March 12, 1988 at the Divine Word College Chapel.

After ordination, he returned to Taiwan to become assistant pastor of the St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Chiayi for one year, then worked as a campus minister in Fu Jen Catholic School, also in Chiayi, for three years. He returned to the Philippines to study guidance counseling at De La Salle University from 1992-1995 while helping out at the St. Jude Catholic School and at the St. Jude Archdiocesan Shrine, respectively.

From 1995-2000, he was assigned at St. Jude Catholic School. In 2000, he became the parish priest of the St. Jude Archdiocesan Shrine and concurrent superior of the SVD Manila District and Vicar Forane of the Vicariate of San José de Trozo of the Archdiocese of Manila.

Bishop-elect Jaucian's motto is: "Remain in Me and I remain in you..." (John l5: 4-9)

New UST Seminary rector

Papal Nuncio Archbishop Fernando Filoni will preside over the installation rites tomorrow, March 19, 6 p.m., at the UST Santissimo Rosario Church of Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP as the new rector of the University Santo Tomas Central Seminary.

The UST Central Seminary is the Philippine interdiocesan seminary run by the Dominican fathers. It's known as "the Philippine Military Academy of the Philippine Catholic Church."

Some 80 percent of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines have come from the seminary. Fr. Ricardo Baccay, who was recently named auxiliary bishop of Tuguegarao by the Vatican, and at 44 years old is the youngest Filipino bishop, is a UST alumnus. Ditto with the new Manila auxiliary bishop, Bishop Broderick Pabillo. Alumni hold important positions in the other Asian churches as well.

Himself a product of the UST Central Seminary, Father Timoner studied philosophy and theology at the Dominican House of Studies in QC, UST Ecclesiastical Faculties in Manila and Catholic University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

New PWU chaplain

Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales of Manila recently appointed Msgr. Hernando Coronel, former secretary general of Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines, as the new chaplain of the Philippine Women's University.

Prior to this assignment, Msgr. Coronel also served as rector of the Manila Cathedral and was president of Radio Veritas and corporate secretary of Radio Veritas, Asia.

Santuario de San José

The Santuario de San José Parish observed the nine-day Novena of Masses to celebrate feast of its patron saint, St. Joseph, on March 19. Fiesta Mass is at 6:15 p.m.

To make the novena especially significant, Fr. Vani E. Silva, OSJ, parish priest, and the pastoral council involved the parishioners; residents of Greenhills; devotees of St. Joseph; members of the parish organizations; and *hermanas* of the past years namely Belen Ticzon-Martel, Nene Pe, Josie Razon, Susan Precilla-Reyes, Vi Enriquez, Milagros Suntay, Fannie Castillo and Dr. Rustica Moral.

This year's *hermana* is Lourdes Co, an active member of religious organizations and civic leader.

St. Joseph Church in Echague

The newly constructed parish church of St. Joseph the Worker in Echague, Isabela will be blessed by Bayombong Bishop Ramon Villena at 8:30 a.m. Thirty eight priests from the different parishes led by parish priest Fr. Patrick Henry Pua and Fr. Dante Masso will concelebrate.

Fr. Pua, the St. Joseph of Echague Parishioners' Association, Inc. and other mandated organizations spearheaded the construction. The design of the beautiful church is a collaboration of architect Pablo Antonio Jr. and architect Rose Balaug.

Generous readers of this column who may want to donate to the new church may text Atty Ruben Lopez or Dr. Winnie Gonzaga at 0919-8203779.

Presentation of the Child Jesus

The Presentation of the Child Jesus (PCJ) Parish will celebrate its 25th founding anniversary on March 25, with a Silver Jubilee Mass by Papal Nuncio Fernando Filoni at 10:30 a.m. The church is at the corner of F. Cruz Street and Aguirre Avenue, inside BF Homes Parañaque.

From a makeshift structure of used GI sheets and donated lumber way back in 1982, the PCJ parish has grown over the years into a complex parish center that addresses the needs of its parishioners.

In Barangay Pantay in Tanauan, Batangas, the residents will celebrate the feast of St. Joseph. "Pantay" is a derivative of the name "Magpantay"—the family name of the late Lino Zarraga Magpantay Sr., grandfather of Matias Magpantay.

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      iii. P10 off on a Beef Supreme McRice Burger
      iv. FREE Go Big Time Coke
3. If you're the lucky winner of an iPod, there are two ways to claim your prize.
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   b. If you're a provincial winner, you can claim your prize by showing the restaurant manager your winning card. The iPod will be available at the McDonald's outlet where you got the peel-apart card two weeks after you notify the manager.

   Note: Present your winning peel-apart card, proof of purchase, valid identification with photo (i.e. driver's license, passport, NBI clearance, SSS, TIN, voter's ID, etc.) in claiming your iPod at the McDonald's Head Office or at the McDonald's outlet where you won the iPod
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ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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Joey Gosiengfiao was planning his directorial comeback

'Eternal master of Pinoy camp'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

CINEMA WAS THE most enduring passion of director Joey Gosiengfiao, who succumbed to a heart attack, his sixth, on Friday—a day after his 66th birthday.

INQUIRER Entertainment witnessed Gosiengfiao rummaging through movie queen Amalia Fuentes' DVD collection, borrowing several titles—all Hollywood classics—last October.

"He loved watching movies," recalled Regal Films' Lily Monteverde, who produced Gosiengfiao's biggest hits: "Temptation Island," "Underage," and "Katorse."

"He grew up in a moviehouse," fellow director Elwood Perez remembered. "He was from a prominent clan of lawyers in Tuguegarao. An uncle owned a theater, where Joey played behind the *telon* (screen)."

Perez said he met Gosiengfiao when they were students at the University of the East. "He confided that his life was like the Tennessee Williams play 'The Glass Menagerie,'" Perez recounted. "His mom Maria was pure Japanese and looked like Lana Turner. She was erudite and genteel. Their house was filled with books. I used to borrow books by Sartre and Kafka from their library."

He would forever remember Gosiengfiao as "a bohemian in a turtleneck, a cigarette dangling from his lips, like French actress Jeanne Moreau," Perez said.

From school plays, they jumped to TV, as directors on the drama series "Balintataw." When the movies beckoned, they made the big leap together.

After working as co-directors in "Lipad, Darna, Lipad" in 1973, Perez's family produced Gosiengfiao's solo film, "La Paloma," in 1974. It top-billed Mona Lisa, Celia Rodriguez and Vina Casino.

"La Paloma" is one of the films featured in the Gosiengfiao retrospective, currently running on Cinema One, ABS-CBN's Filipino movie channel on cable.

"We got a 16mm black-and-white copy from Direk Joey," said Cinema One's Ronald Arguelles. "We planned to hold a big screening event, to raise funds for his medical needs."

Last time Arguelles saw Gosiengfiao was on March 6, during a taping of an interview for the retrospective. "In that interview, he mentioned that his favorite movie was 'Bedspacers' because it was based on his student life," Arguelles said.

'ETERNAL'/ H2

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DAHIL SMART TAYO

Singapore stage group to tell porn star's story

SINGAPORE—A PLAY ABOUT THE LIFE OF local porn star Annabel Chong—who gained international notoriety for her 1995 film showing her perform over 200 sex acts—is likely to push the envelope of public tolerance in conservative Singapore.

The play's producers hope it will challenge some of the preconceptions of Singaporeans, who have long professed a love of traditional "Asian values," even as the government tries to portray a slightly more liberal image.

World record

The video of Chong's antics, which the producers billed as a world record at the time, has never been available in Singapore's stores because pornography is banned here, and Chong has since retired from the industry.

But now Singapore's Toy Factory Productions, an independent stage group, is revisiting the X-rated actress' brief but controversial career in a play titled "251" that opens next month.

"251" explores a little known side of Chong—including her troubled experience with religion as a teenager, a violent sexual assault as a college student overseas, and the intellectual premise of the video that earned her a spot in porn history.

"Whether we like her or absolutely hate her, we can't deny the fact that she is very much part of our national psyche," said director Loretta Chen. The cast includes local actress Cynthia Lee-MacQuarrie and four others.

But "251" has already been criticized even before its April 5 opening.

"I think it's cheap and vulgar to use Annabel Chong as (a) play production," one user named "Tommy" wrote in an Internet online forum last month.

Playwright Ng Yi-Sheng, who wrote "251," said the criticism was unsurprising.

"Annabel is iconic to all Singaporeans because she's a force of sexual chaos," Ng said. "Just to say her name is to suggest a taboo."

DID YOU KNOW...

In one scene, the Chong character encounters a childhood friend to whom she reveals that her exploits have perhaps affected her self-esteem.

"You never sold out," the friend says.

"I sold my body to everyone—to the church, to the strip club clientele, even the lonely men and women in their homes in front of their video screens," the actress responds.

Partial nudity

Director Chen said there would be partial nudity in the play, but declined to detail how they would depict the stunts that earned the play its name.

Annabel Chong was the stage name of Grace Quek, 34, who is now said to be leading a quiet life as a Web designer in the United States since leaving the porn industry in 2003. Quek has since declined media interviews and attempts to contact her were unsuccessful. *AP*

GOSIENGFIAO directs Georgia Ortega in his last feature film, "Nights of Serafina," 1996.

'Eternal master of Pinoy camp'

From page H1

"He should be remembered for his support of young filmmakers," Perez asserted. Gosiengfiao was supervising producer for Good Harvest, a subsidiary of Regal which produced the so-called *pito-pito* movies (low budget, shot in seven days and processed in seven more) by independent filmmakers Lav Diaz, Rico Ilarde and Jeffrey Jeturian in the late 1990s.

"In a way, *pito-pito* movies were the precursor of today's digital movies," Jeturian said. "Budget was limited, but we had a free hand."

Witty lines & wacky ideas were his forte

"That was an exciting and highly creative period," Ilarde said. "With a budget of P2 to P4 million, Good Harvest produced gems."

Jeturian related: "Two months ago, Direk Joey called, asking me to recommend a scriptwriter because he was planning his directorial comeback."

According to Arguelles, Gosiengfiao's last full-length film was "Nights of Serafina" in 1996.

Jeturian reported: "Direk Joey wanted a writer who understood his humor. I suggested Chris Martinez, who directed the stage version of 'Temptation Island' at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 2003."

On its last night, Gosiengfiao watched "Temptation Island" at the CCP with his stars Azenith Briones and Dina Bonnevie, according to Martinez. "At curtain call, I gave him my bouquet of flowers."

'Serafina' parties

Martinez recalled that his UP theater friends had mounted "Nights of Serafina" parties in their younger years. "We would rent a VHS copy of 'Serafina' from ACA Video and laugh all night." Later on, they threw "Temptation Island" parties. "All my friends knew that movie's lines by heart. [Comic] John Lapus produced the stage version. He had the script transcribed from a videotape copy."

Diaz hailed Joey as an "eternal master of Pinoy camp."

Bonnevie insisted that no one could rival Gosiengfiao when it came to witty lines and wacky ideas. "One line has stuck in my mind: 'Once a waiter; always a waiter.' For 'Temptation,' he had a giant ice cream cone and fried chicken in the middle of a desert!"

Gosiengfiao was also her guardian, she said. "I was only 17, and my dad entrusted me to him. He rushed me to the hospital when I was [sick, and] when I fought with [my boyfriend and co-star] Alfie Anido, he acted as mediator."

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"A FEEL-GOOD MOVIE...,RAISE A GLASS TO SALUTE WILL SMITH... HE EMERGES A WINNER." Leah Rozen, PEOPLE
"A TOUCHING MOVIE, WITH A BEAUTIFUL AND UNDERSTATED PERFORMANCE FROM WILL SMITH." Owen Gleiberman, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY
"★★★★ ! POWERFUL AND UPLIFTING!" Sharon Edwards, FOX TV
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WINNER Jaden Christopher Syre Smith Best Young Actor
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PATHFINDER 1:20 / 3:30 / 5:40 / 7:50 / 10:00	DREAMGIRLS 1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30	300 11:35 / 2:05 / 4:35 / 7:05 / 9:50
THE GOOD SHEPHERD 2:00 / 5:30 / 9:00	YOU GOT ME 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:50

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1	300 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	2	PATHFINDER 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	3	HAPPY HEARTS 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
4	SIQUIJOR 12:30 / 2:35 / 4:40 / 6:45 / 8:50	5	YOU GOT ME 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35		

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PHILIPP SUPNET JAY AR APUYAN VANESSA MERCADO
BAYANI CASIMIRO JR. RIVA REYES SHALALA
FLORA GASSER RAFRAF SANTIAGO
Written & Directed by:
JUN URBANO
*
(MISTEYKS OPDA NEYSION ADRES YATA)
OPENS MARCH 21, 2007
ADVENTURES

Homecoming fit for a Prince

By Nini Valera

ILOILO CITY—COUNTING ON vote-rich Iloilo to bring him to the top four in the reality talent search "Starstruck The Next Level," survivor Prince Stefan made the most of his homecoming here on Wednesday.

His alma mater, University of San Agustin, was his first stop in a marathon tour of this genteel Western Visayan city.

Stefan, 18, was a fourth year high school student at the University of San Agustin before he joined the talent search aired over GMA 7.

"I was touched by the welcome I got from the students," Stefan, speaking in Filipino, told INQUIRER Entertainment. "I found out that the female students rehearsed for their presentation until late at night—and it was exam week!"

Text pledges

After the show at the school gym, Stefan signed autographs for the students, who all pledged text votes for the son of Liza Anlocotan, a former overseas contract worker, and Saed Alis Al Abraham Faisal, said to be a Saudi royalty.

Earlier in the contest, Stefan revealed that he had yet to meet his father, whom he hoped would finally see him as he performs on national television.

"My mother told me she was able to contact my father a few weeks ago," Stefan said. "She said she had told him that I was in 'Starstruck,' and that she had mentioned his name on TV. My father didn't mind that we broadcast his name. He told my mother, it was OK."

Stefan admitted he had joined "Starstruck" so that his father would find him.

"But I've learned to love my work here—and now, I am hoping to win," Stefan said. "With the help of the Ilonggos, maybe I have a better chance."

Veteran of sorts

The titles up for grabs in the talent search are Ultimate Love Team, Ultimate Hunk and Ultimate Sweetheart.

A veteran of local amateur contests in Iloilo, Stefan said he had experience losing in the past.

"You can't please everybody," he said. "So, *kanya-kanyang diskarte* (To each his own). But I think the Ilonggos are behind me as a solid block. They were behind Gian Carlo last year. (Gian Carlo was a runner-up of Ultimate Survivor Marky Cielo)."

Another survivor who's banking on the Visayan vote is Rich Asuncion of Bohol. Last week, Asuncion had her own homecoming in Tagbilaran City, where she made her appeal for text votes from the parish church and other civic organizations in the city.

Poor Rich

Earlier, she told INQUIRER Entertainment that she was handicapped by text votes, which she couldn't finance owing to her family's very limited resources.

In Iloilo last Wednesday, Asuncion seemed to be another favorite of the citizens of this Visayan province.

"I think I have conquered the whole Visayan region," Asuncion said. "In Cebu last Monday, the people were shouting for the one from Bohol, the 'Bisaya,' and that was me."

But Asuncion said she has also realized that people could be inconsistent when it comes to voting.

"They might like you one time, but they might choose to vote for another candidate," she said.

She admitted that the other female survivors—Kris Bernal of Quezon City and Jewel Mische of Bulacan—were more popular than her.

Voted back

"Yes, people also know me," she said. "But people always scream louder for Jewel and Kris. I am just happy to be still here in the game."

Three weeks ago, Asuncion was booted out of the competition, having received the lowest number of text votes—about 55,000. She managed to return after a wild card round, where she and Mart Escudero were voted back into the game.

Asked to assess her chances, Asuncion said she would land one of the titles if the race were to be won purely with talent. "But I have no idea where I would be on the basis of text votes," she admitted.

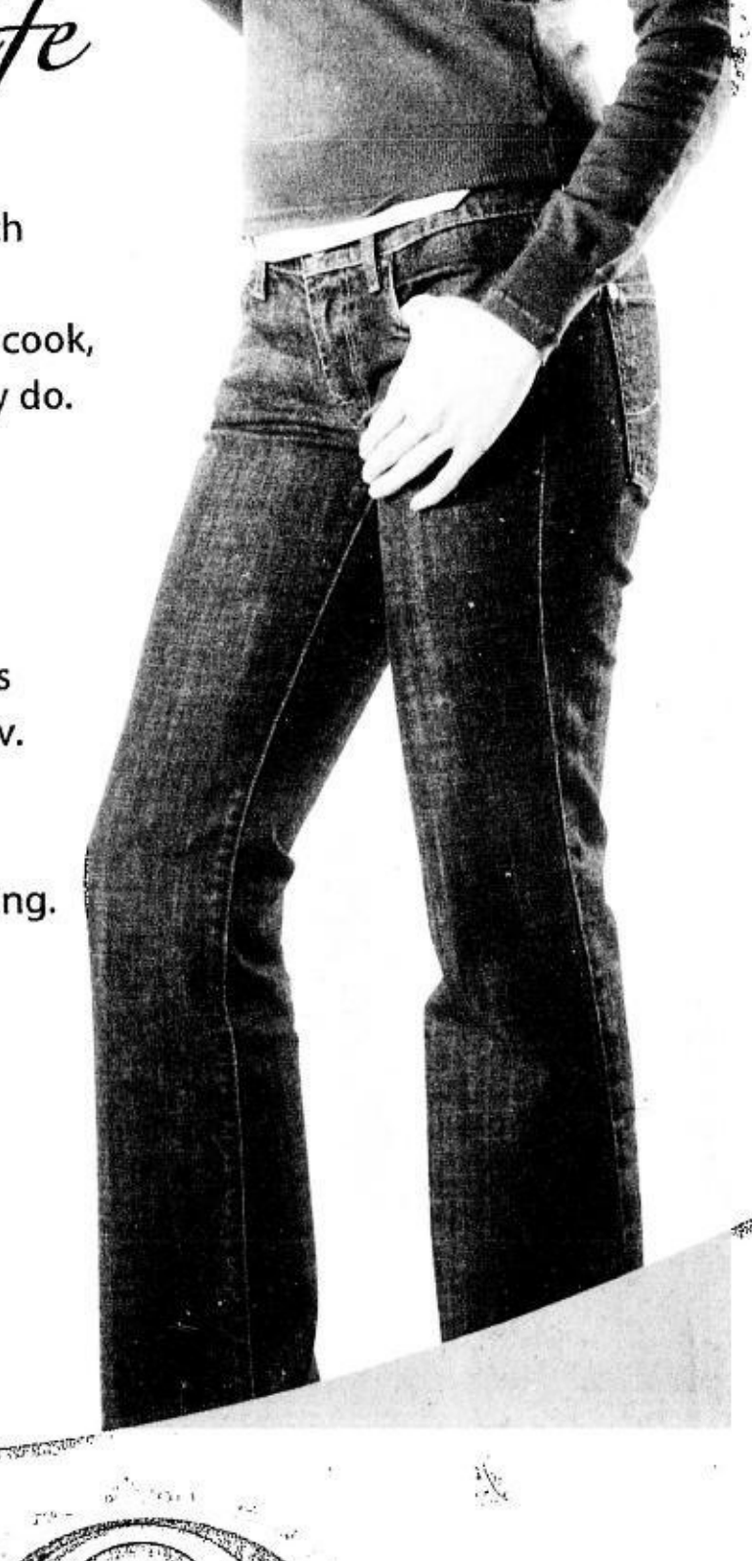
The six survivors, including Aljur Abrenica and Mart Escudero, had a mall show in the city Wednesday afternoon, performing for at least a thousand teens who could also be nurturing dreams of stardom.

PRINCE Stefan is overwhelmed by the welcome he got from the people of his home province.

DANCING with *ati-atihan* performers at the Iloilo airport with the other "Starstruck Survivor 6" upon arrival on Wednesday

JEWEL Mische, Aljur Abrenica and Prince Stefan during a mall show later in the day

Something new is waiting for you.



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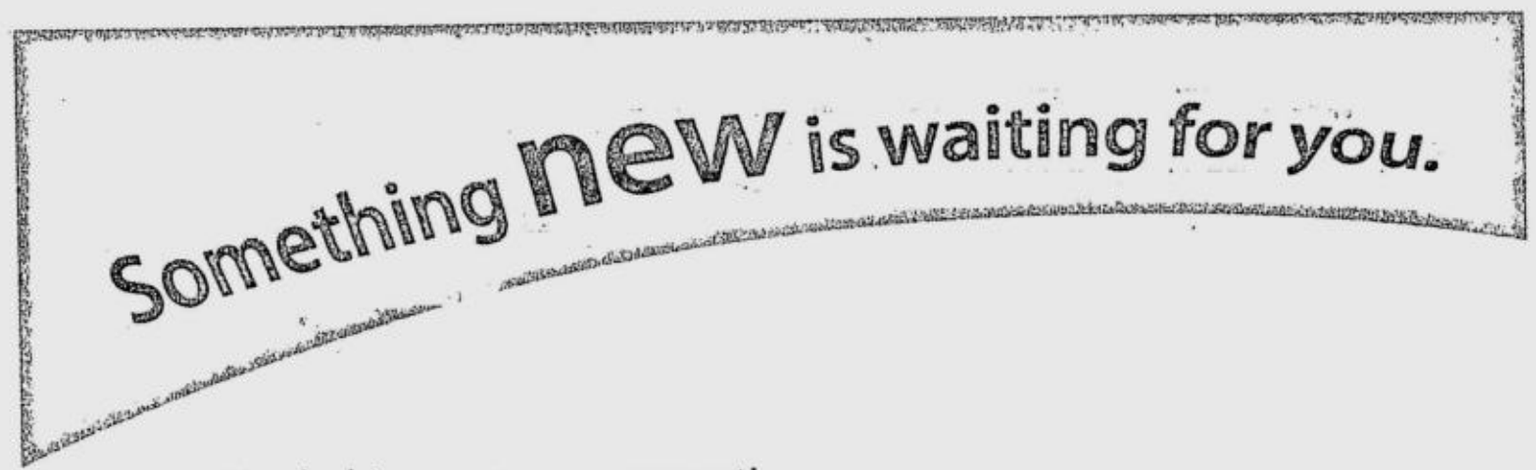


ROUNDUP

Anti-piracy support

THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION (MPA) AUDIO VISUAL Entertainment For Global Audiences has hailed the Optical Media Board under the stewardship of chair Edu Manzano for its ongoing enforcement efforts.

MPA executive vice president John G. Malcolm cited Manzano's dedication and achievements in 2006 for which the OMB chief was given the association's inaugural Asia-Pacific Copyright Enforcer of the year (ACE) award during the CineAsia Convention in Beijing, China last December.

Malcolm pledged that his association will work closely with the Philippine government to protect intellectual property rights.

'Musical' outfits

Fila was the official outfitter for the cast of "High School Musical" in Asia, produced by Ateneo de Manila's Blue Repertory recently.

The musical follows the story of popular high school basketball star Troy Bolton (Shark Alonzo) and timid, math genius Gabriella Montez (Karel Marquez) as they discover that they share a secret passion for singing.

High School Musical fashion are available at Fila stores in Glorietta, SM Megamall, SM Mall of Asia, Robinson's Galleria, Festival Mall and Market!Market!

"HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL"

'Amazing Race Asia 2'

Producers AXN has made the call for Racers to put their skills and endurance to the test in the second season of AXN's "The Amazing Race Asia 2."

Interested participants living and/or working in Asia (excluding Australia, New Zealand, and the Middle East) may submit their applications in teams of two.

Contestants must be aged 21 and above, speak English and possess both a valid driver's license and an international passport.

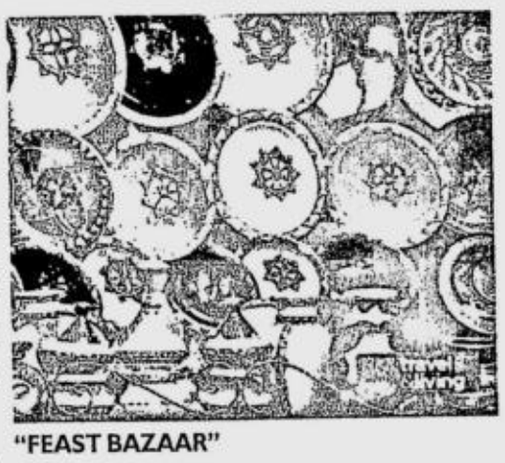
Registration will close on March 30.

'Feast Bazaar'

Discovery Travel and Living's "Feast Bazaar" examines the food, culture and community of craftsmen and women whose families have been producing these goods.

The 10-part series leads viewers on a grand tour of the markets of Morocco and Syria.

Hosted by English-born, Melbourne-based chef Barry Vera, the series airs every Wednesday from 8:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., with replays the following Monday at 10 p.m.


"FEAST BAZAAR"

HK film market

Christine S. Dayrit, chairman of the International Film Festival Committee of the Film Development Council of the Philippines, announces the participation of the Philippine delegation to the Hong Kong Filmart, the largest film market in Asia, from March 20 to 23.

The FDCP is sponsoring the cost of the trade booth at the fair, where producers will have a venue to sell their local films and network with international buyers and film experts.

Members of the Philippine delegation to the film market include Presidential Consultant on Entertainment Affairs Vic del Rosario and Vincent del Rosario of Viva Films, Roselle Monteverde of Regal Films, Joey Abacan of GMA Films, Tess Fuentes, Jennifer Ching and Carrie Raymundo of Star Cinema, Tikoy Aguiluz of Cinemanila, Orly Ilacad and Dean Arriola of Canary Films and Octoarts Films, Atty Joji Alonzo of MLR Films, Rene Concepcion of DLSU Graduate School of Business and Anyati Orcullo and Mariani Abdullah, buyers of Filipino Film and TV content for Brunei Darussalam.

For details, visit www.hkfilmart.com/hkfilmart.

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R-13

3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
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R-13

4 PATHFINDER
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R-13

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BECAUSE I SAID SO
PG13
11:40,1:50,4:00, 6:10,8:20,10:30

DREAM GIRLS
PG13
11:50,2:30,5:10, 7:50,10:30

300
R13
12:00,2:30,5:00, 7:30,10:00

PATHFINDER
R13
1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30

300
R13
12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41

'Carmen' weekend treat at Star City

STAR CITY BALLET MANILA stages one of the most popular ballets, "Carmen," every Saturday, 7:30 p.m. at the Star Theater. The show, which runs until May, stars BM principal ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde in the title role.

"Carmen" is the ballet version of a spicy *telenovela* as it combines the elements of drama, romance, obsession and betrayal that Filipino audiences love.

The mysterious Carmen lures the once upright military officer Don Jose into a life of abandon and perdition, only to leave him for a dashing toreador, Escamillo. Broken and desperate, Don Jose attempts to save his love—only to lose his sanity in the painful process.

The one-act ballet in five scenes will be presented free to the public as part of Ballet Manila's advocacy of bringing classical ballet to the people.

Open daily from 2 p.m. onwards, Star CIty is located at the CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

LISA Macuja-Elizalde plays Carmen at the Star Theater.

X Axis album launch

The X Axis band launches its album "Abscissa" under CPS Flutos Music Corporation on March 20, 8 p.m. at Aruba, Tomas Morato, Quezon City.

The band is composed of Paul Arroyo (vocals), JB Mendoza (rhythm guitar), Sherwin Gulla (bass guitar), Jinno Mendoza (lead guitar) and Patrick Calleja (drums).

Mossimo bikini summit

This summer, Mossimo brings sexy back via the "2007 Mossimo Bikini Summit: Take It Underground"—the competition that launched the careers of some of the industry's hottest hunks and honeys.

Brent Javier, Carlo Maceda, Elnar Ingebrigsten, Jordan Herrera, Martin Jickain, Denice Montecillo and April Tanjueco have enjoyed successful careers in modeling and show business after competing in the Summit.

Mossimo takes the Summit to the streets of Metro Manila via a reggaeton-themed party, which would blend hip-hop, dancehall, reggae and techno.

The Summit has always been known for setting the hottest trends in fashion and music.

In 2005, they brought different styles of music—classical, pop, hiphop and rock—together in a pageant-concert at the Araneta Coliseum.

It will be held in Metro Manila on April 21.

SHOW TIME

Today

Mau Marcelo at Starmall Edsa-Shaw

Empress Schuck at Metropolis Star Alabang

OJ Mariano at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk

March 20

Dale Adriatico at RJTV Bar

New Minstrels at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3

March 21

D' Daughters at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk

RJ with the Mellow Yellow Band at RJTV Bar

Wednesday Jazz Festival at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3 with Annie Brazil and Merk and Friends

March 22

"Classic Romance 2: Walking on Sunshine" with Raymond Lauchengco at Teatrino, Promenade, Greenhills

Ministix at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk

RJ at LA Café

March 23

The Apple Band at Hard Rock Café, Glorietta

Gary V at Robinson's Place Pioneer

New Minstrels at Grand Boulevard Hotel, Roxas Boulevard

Ntwine at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk

March 24

Gary V at Robinson's Place Metro East

Tribe of Levi at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk

March 25

Mau Marcelo at Metropolis Star Alabang

The Apple Band at Hyatt Hotel and Casino-Manila

OJ Mariano at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk

March 27

New Minstrels at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3

Dale Adriatico at RJTV Bar

March 28

Cocoy Laurel in Concert at the CCP Main Theater with guests Iwi Laurel, Denise Laurel and Nicole Asensio; 8 p.m.

MP Strings at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk

RJ with the Mellow Yellow Band at RJTV Bar

March 29

"Classic Romance 2: Walking on Sunshine" with Raymond Lauchengco at Teatrino, Promenade, Greenhills

Ministix at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk

March 30

New Minstrels at Grand Boulevard Hotel, Roxas Boulevard

March 31

Rachelle Ann Go at Starmall Edsa-Shaw

Area One at Merk's Bar & Bistro, Greenbelt 3

April 12

"Classic Romance 2: Walking on Sunshine" with Raymond Lauchengco at Teatrino, Promenade, Greenhills

April 19

"Classic Romance 2: Walking on Sunshine" with Raymond Lauchengco at Teatrino, Promenade, Greenhills

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3 PATHFINDER
MTRCB. R-13
12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

4 DREAMGIRLS
MTRCB. PG-13
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE: FLUSED AWAY (GP) 1:35, 3:35, 5:35 / PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS (GP) 7:35, 10:00

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Persistence pays off for 3 local bands

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

PERSISTENCE IS A VIRTUE.

That was how the Beatles bagged a recording contract with EMI London—after being turned down by Decca, an old major label whose executives thought the group wouldn't amount to anything.

Here in the Philippines, we have three bands whose persistence served them in good stead.

JOIN THE CLUB

Join The Club is a pop-rock quartet with a punk-driven sound reminiscent of the Ramones. Its members, all music majors from UST, refused to back down after several failed attempts to snag a record deal.

Its debut CD, "Nobela" (Redrum/Warner), was actually released in 2005 but was repackaged recently to include videos and acoustic versions of several tracks. Playing live for the press during the formal album re-launch, Join The Club pulled out all the stops. The performance was marked by tight musicianship and bursts of high energy.

It's not hard to like this band. Some of the songs in "Nobela" describe as bitter yet insightful experiences the absence of a loved one ("Hayaang Maidlip"), saving a failed romance ("Minsan Pa"), communication breakdown ("Tinig"), being ignored ("Walang Pakialam"), the day after a split-up ("Lunes") and the cycle of loving and leaving (in the title track).

The sense of frustration in the lyrics is propelled by raging guitars and a perky rhythm section whose drummer, Pao Santiago, has professed to have been influenced by Edmund Fortuno, Mark Escueta and Raimund Marasigan.

Vocalist Biboy Renia, who also plays the guitar, says the music of Join The Club seeks to "perfect the art of loneliness' and portray "infinite sadness." Renia wrote all the songs and also sings in a voice that sounds like a wide-eyed teenager emerging unfazed by emotional turmoil.

REVIEW

CHICOSCI

Chicosci is the former Chico Science Project that Club Dredd owner Patrick Reidenbach raved about in the 1990s.

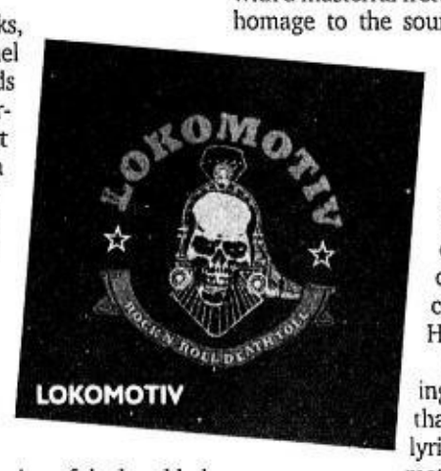
Although it never really cracked the mainstream even after recording three albums, this band has its own set of fans that faithfully show up at gigs around town.

On its fourth self-titled CD (Universal Music/MCA), Chicosci assumes a Gothic persona and weaves an imaginative bunch of songs dripping with gory scenes of vampires carousing in the night.

The titles alone ("7 Black Roses," "The Devil Made Me Do It, "Knives," "You're Killing Me," "Manila Teenage Death Squad," "Chicosci Vampire Social Club," among others) are potent clues to the creepy mood and theme of the music.

CHICOSCI

In most tracks, vocalist Miguel Chavez sounds like an exasperated Robert Smith; on a few occasions he snarls like a demented metal head. Generally he plays the vampire character quite well, enhanced by the rattling sting of the band led by guitarist Miguel Alcaraz.



Playing this CD among friends may be more conducive if you don the appropriate chic fashion—black eyeliner/lipstick and pale makeup, although 10 years out of date. Then again, look at Chavez's nocturnal androgynous look on the CD sleeves and imagine how much fun he's having whenever Chicosci bonds with its fans on moonlit nights.

LOKOMOTIV

Lokomotiv is the hot new group founded by ex-members of the disbanded Razorback and Wolfgang. They came together in the United States, where vocalist Basti Artadi, guitarist David Aguirre and drummer Wolf Gemora have been living for the past few years.

In its debut outing, "Rock N' Roll Death Toll" (EMI), the band is joined by Southern California native Danny Gonzalez, who plays bass to complete the metal-infused juggernaut that Lokomotiv defines (although its website prefers "hard rock" to describe the music, since heavy metal sounds rather passé).

The best thing about this album is the resurrection of Aguirre, a naturally gifted guitar powerhouse with a masterful fretwork that pays homage to the sound that made legends out of Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, Metallica and other headbangers' delights, including of course Jimi Hendrix.

Aguirre's riffing is so good that the songs' lyrics don't even matter anymore. They're illegible, anyway, due to lousy printing of the CD sheets. But what they're about is the catharsis of unleashing anger, disappointment, frustration, regret and sadness over situations or circumstances that wayward young people encounter.

Listening to "House of Lies," "Ride With Me," "State of Mind," "Ashes of Home," "Slow Grind," "Anthrmthrfuckr" and "Five Alive" is like watching a whole army of howling kids, dazed and confused by their own crimes and misdemeanors, cursing but seeking redemption from evil, and finding refuge in a mother figure in the last track, "Madre Salvacion."

Lokomotiv is currently based in LA but is reportedly preparing to tour Manila. Already it has seen the departure of Artadi due to creative differences. But a replacement was quickly made and it looks like this band intends to go long-term, because Aguirre persists on chasing his rock 'n' roll dreams.

Other new releases

ALPHA MUSIC CORPORATION has released a 14-track compilation featuring up-and-coming and established indie bands.

Titled "Rock Grooves in Delirious Ways," the album includes modern rock ballads such as Cattski's "Obviously Blind," Audio Lokal's "Sana'y Di Na Lang," Subliminal's "Tryin," Plaster of Paris' "Sinungaling," Kartoon Chemistry's "Ngayon O Bukas Man" and The Spills' "You Don't Understand Me."

Other featured bands are Shifting Sand, Spoons, Alamid, Cover Me Quick, Pop Filter, Moonstar 88, Last Train and Mac.

Praise hits

Praise Music has released two new albums—Amy Grant's "Time Again: Amy Grant Live" and Josh Groban's "Awake."

Grant's latest release includes well-loved classics like "Thy Word," "In A Little While," "Saved By Love," "Lead Me On," "Baby, Baby" and "I Will Remember You."

Groban's third album is his most personal as he co-wrote four tracks.

SPIN CITY

Both collections are available at House of Praise outlets, Christian bookstores and record bars.

Latest single

Rachelle Ann Go's current single "Don't Say Goodbye" is from her latest album "Obsession,"

which was produced by Christian de Walden of Hollywood.

The Viva artist's third studio album contains 13 originals from songwriters in Europe, the United States and the Philippines.

The other songs in the album are "And Me You," "Alam ng Ating Mga Puso," "This Must Be Love," "Come One Day," "I Will Always Love You Anyway," "Walk Into My Life," "And You Love Me," My Forever Love," "I'm Sure," "You Are My Obsession," "Something in the Air" and "Iyong-iyo."

OPM album

MCA Music's takes its first OPM artist, Julianne, with her debut album "Grateful," which features the single "Kabig ng Bibig."

RACHELLE ANN GO

"My music is me," says the singer-songwriter, who wrote all 11 tracks in her album. "It's something that evolves the same way I'm growing as a person."

Dance tunes

Teen idol Gerald Anderson introduces a new summer dance craze to the tune of the dance hit "Don't Play With Your Noodle (La La La)," performed by the duo Soul Control.

The single on the CD "Gerald's Noodle Dance" comes with a music video with easy-to-follow dance steps and routines.

Also in the album are the 2007 remix of "Dale Candela," "Just Can't Get Enough," "Somebody's Watching Me," "Bizarre Love Triangle," "Lalala Girl," "Bad Boy," "Don't Play Nice," "Space Cowboy," "Nasty Girl," "Skinny" and "Big Fun."

GERALD ANDERSON

WITH Drew Barrymore in his latest movie, "Music & Lyrics"

Hugh Grant, the world's wittiest 'miserable' man

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—HE MUST BE the world's wittiest miserable man.

Hugh Grant came up with the term himself—he said he is a "miserablist." In our Friday column, part 1 of our press con with the actor, he claimed in an amusing discourse to have been miserable since the '90s, because of the pressure to maintain his success.

If he has to wear tight pants and high heels as an '80s pop star has-been in the film "Music and Lyrics" to keep his cache as one of modern cinema's leading romantic-comedy stars, so be it.

Hugh's co-star, **Drew Barrymore**, described in a separate interview how one scene featuring the "miserablist" tickled her: "He's in these tight pants and high heels and these sort of necklaces in a way I'd never seen Hugh Grant before. I kept thinking, this is going to be great for people to see. He was in an attire and striking an attitude different from what we've seen him in his other movies. It was obviously very odd for him to do something like that but I thought he did a good job."

Later clarifying that maybe "he's not that miserable," Hugh described the main character of the book he has been trying to write for years: "What I've done is take all the worst aspects of myself and extrapolate them wildly into this monster. So I've created this really chilling and depressing anti-hero."

And when asked what put him in a bad mood, after saying "I don't know," he deadpanned, "My liver perhaps."

If all miserable folks were like Hugh, let's have more "miserablists" in this world.

For someone who claims to not like work, you were reportedly obsessed about rehearsing with your voice and piano coach.

I've got two modes—totally lazy doing nothing or, once I've signed on, absolutely obsessive perfectionist because of the terror of humiliation. If I'm going to do a comedy and it's not going to be funny, that's unbelievably humiliating in a worldwide context. The fear of humiliation makes the mind focus.

Is it true that you never had any real interest in music?

I know it's unnatural but it's true. I blame my parents. They never played any music except maybe once a year; my father would put on some Scottish country dance music (laughter). I still find that quite stirring (laughter). My mother actually played the piano. When I learned to play the piano for this film, I suddenly understood why it's soothing.

You did such a good job, though.

Actually, there's music in my family, especially on my mother's side. They're all highly musical. It's just me and my brother who are hopeless. There used to be a big family get-together at Christmas and everyone would sing carols. It was obnoxious, really. Each family would choose a carol and sing it. When it got to me and my brother, the whole thing came to a grinding halt. We just couldn't hold a note. Now I have confidence. I could virtually sing for you now.

Can you talk about how you trained to sing, dance and play the piano?

I had tons of piano lessons and that's actually gratifying. It's one of those few things in life where there's a direct correlation between the amount of work I put in and the progress I make. It's weird. I practice and practice and it's miserable and I can't do it.

Singing was just a question of having these fantastic record producers around me who were very clever with the computer. I sing like a hound but by the time I've finished with it, it sounds unbelievable. They can tune me, put sort of an echo and make my voice richer. Knowing that as a safety net, I gradually got more and more confident.

The dancing thing was really hell because I either have that or don't. I emphatically don't. They got this brilliant choreographer who does all those top girls, **Britney (Spears)** and **Christina (Aguilera)** and everyone. He **(Dan Karaty)** and I stood facing each other in a cold downtown dance studio last January. He said, "Okay, I am going to put the music on and just express yourself." He put the music on and I just stood stock still for half an hour (laughter). I just couldn't do it. In the end—I say this jokingly but it's actually true—I had to resort to alcohol and drugs to get me through that (laughter). But who dances when they're not drunk? No one.

Marc Lawrence told us he gave you a piano as a gift at the end of the filming. Are you now playing the piano regularly?

I am so ashamed. That piano is still sitting in its cardboard box (laughter) downstairs in my house. I mean to go with it; I just haven't.

Why have you not been on the London stage?

My feeling about the theater is that it's great fun for the actors and unmitigated misery for the audience. If one is brutally honest, about one time out of the 30 times one goes to the theater is actually an enjoyable experience.

HUGH/ I2

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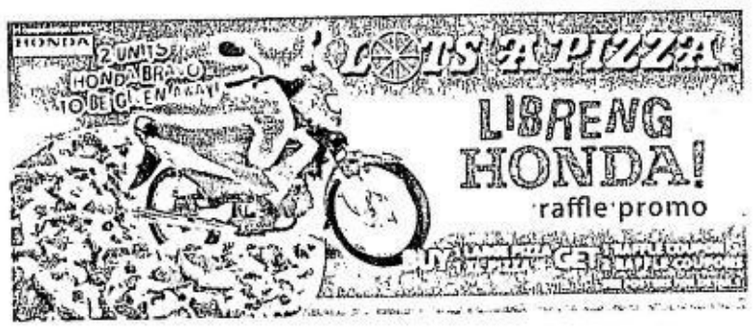

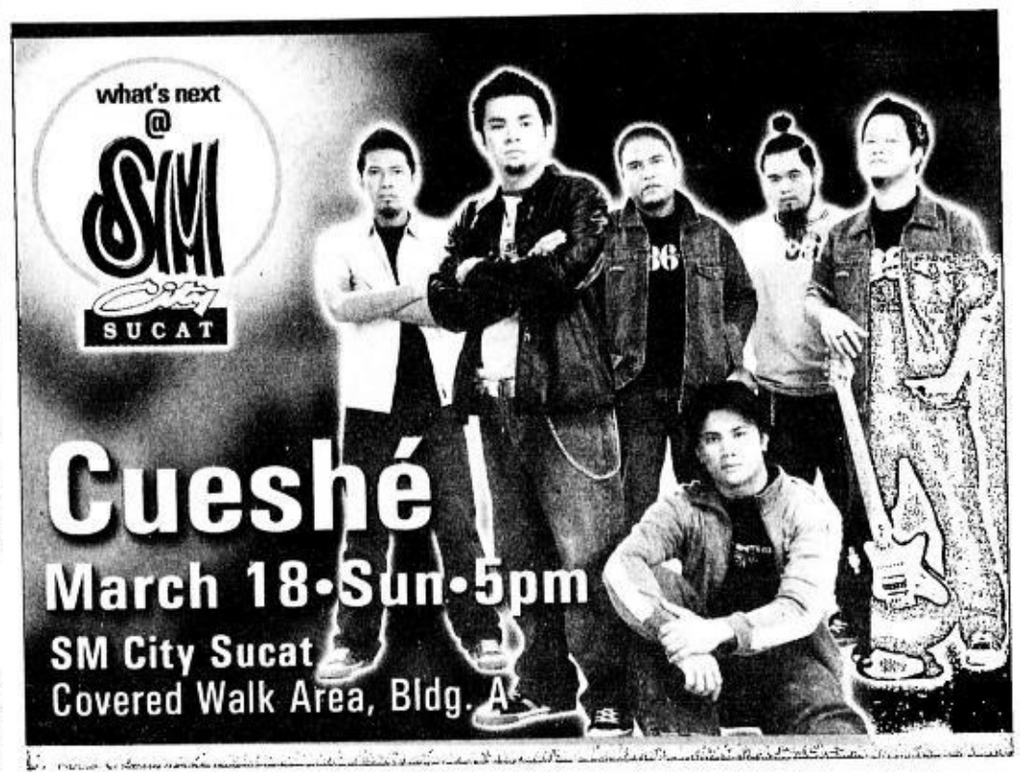

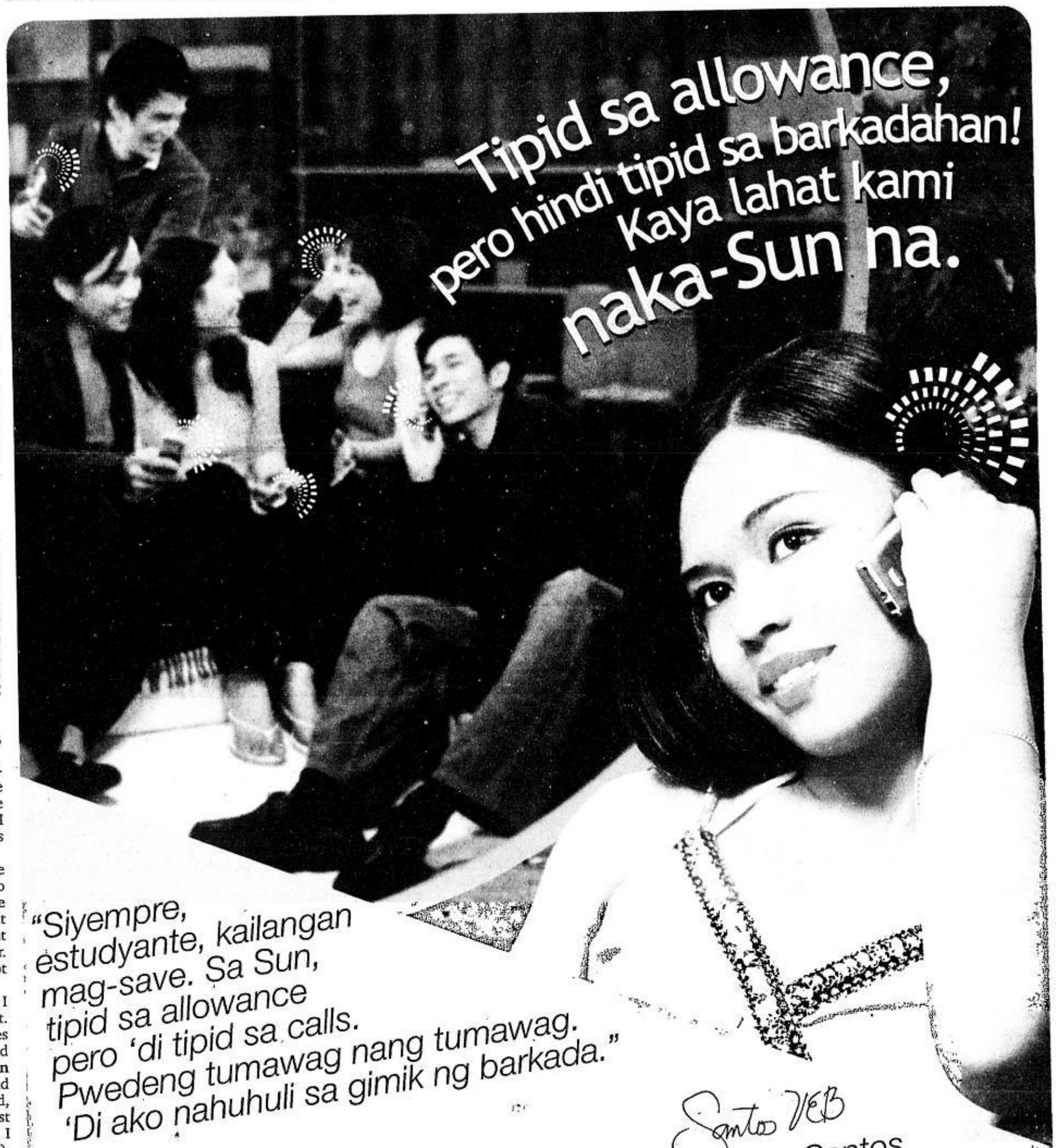

Hugh Grant, the world's wittiest 'miserable' man ...

From page 11

The rest of the time, I was just thinking, "I'm so bored. I can't wait for my gin and tonic at half-time. I want to get out." So I can't justify the pleasure of acting on-stage. Performing comedy on the stage is a lot easier and more fun than doing it on film.

Onstage, when I get that first laugh, I know I'm off. But part of my problem is, the last time I did go onstage with a comedy, every time I got a laugh, I was so thrilled that it made me laugh as well (laughter). That's a problem.

You seem to choose only romantic-comedies and nothing else.

It's only interesting to do acting in a field where you think well. I'm pretty good at this. I'm better than most actors and when I do very deep, dark, serious things, I'm OK but I think there are other people who could do it better. When I do light comedy, I think I've got something to offer so that's really why I make those choices.

Did you find the humor in "Borat" offensive?

Sacha Baron Cohen is a Cambridge graduate and probably one of the most intelligent men in the country. I am afraid I do absolutely adore Borat. That (humor) is right up my alley. I watched the movie again last night on the hotel video. I think that was a work of rare genius.

Hollywood is full of folks who talk about the craft of acting. Do you find that bollocks?

I think on the whole it is bollocks, actually. I think probably it is because so often you see a child actor, seven years old, giving an absolutely perfect blistering performance and you realize that child has had no training. They haven't had to give this an awful lot of thought or theory or talked the arse off it. They just do it. It's just pure talent and I think that's really what it is. An extraordinary amount of mystique is built around a lot of the arts, particularly fine arts. We're in the world capital of fine art bullshit right now (laughter).

Marc said that only you can do what you did—take a hiatus from acting for several years and still be successful when you come back.

I am not sure that's true. The digestive tract of the American public is pretty swift. It's true that so long as your last films have made money, the studios are still prepared to employ you.

You no longer have an agent—a rarity in Hollywood.

I've been a skeptic about agents for all of my career. I think there may be times when [having an agent would be good] for beginners. In the past ... agents [may have been] really committed because they cared about the person they represented. But I think it has become a bit of a business now. I personally have never wanted, needed or listened to any advice from any agent. All I've ever done is grind my teeth when writing a check for 10 percent of my income so I wish I'd done this (be without an agent) years ago. My agents were perfectly charming; I just didn't need them or use them.

> 'I've never asked to be near a golf course when I'm shooting, but I'm furious if I'm not'

Isn't an agent there to take care of the nasty business for you, to get much more money for you?

That's the theory but it's not so in practice, actually. For a start, I have friends in the business—studio executives. When I agree to do a film, I always call them and say, how much do you think I should be paid for this? They'll tell me the real figure and say this is what you're worth. That doesn't always tally with what your agent's going to ask for because the agents are as keen, if not more keen, to curry favor with the studios as they are with their own clients so they may have agreed to a much lower price. The whole thing is utterly criminal (laughter).

So for the last six films I've asked a studio executive friend, what you think I should be paid? They give me a number and then I've told my agent that's the number. You just go away and get that. They're so frightened you'll sue or hate them for getting it wrong. They then say, "Well, you should get a lawyer to do that. So you then have to get one of these absurd Hollywood lawyers also taking a percentage (laughter) to get you a price which frankly you could have gotten in the first place, just between you and the studio. So it's one of the great scams of all time.

For you, what are the pros and cons of fame?

The pros are money, attention and having your vanity stroked the whole time, expensive hotels and all those luxury things that I enjoy so much. I love all that. The cons—lack of privacy.

Sean Connery reportedly requested that his filming locations should be close to the golf course. Do you request that, too, and what is your handicap?

I've never demanded that I be near a golf course but I'm furious if I'm not. My (golf) addiction is out of control. You ask me how much I'd like to play. I'd like to play from the moment I get up till the moment I go to bed. There's really something wrong with me. I don't know what it is and if you think about how much I've played over the last six years, I should have a lower handicap than I do. But I've bought my way to a seven-handicap through millions of lessons.

We heard that you're a wine connoisseur. How did you become an expert?

I am not really a big connoisseur. All that happened was that my father drank a lot of wine (laughter) throughout my childhood and served us wine even when we were children (laughter). He always used to say, "Yeah, you should have some." I think that's very civilized. Wine was very important to him. My mother hated it. My father used to have to go into the toilet to open the second bottle every night so she does not hear the cork coming out of the bottle (laughter).

I remember in one of the many unemployed phases in my early career, I'd start a hobby. One hobby was reading up about wine. I bought the "Sainsbury's Book of Wine." Sainsbury's is a big supermarket there (in England). I kept a wine diary and made lots of notes (laughing). I still have that diary. It's incredibly pretentious, especially as it was always written when I was drunk so it will say, "I particularly like this Pinot Noir. It flirts with the palate before kindling in the gut" (laughter) and stuff like that.

So do you collect wines?

I don't collect. Word just got out that I liked wine, which is really a nice way of saying he's semi-alcoholic (laughter). I am given an awful lot of wine particularly by Hollywood. When they're trying to butter me up, I get a case of delicious La Tour or something.

HUGH/14

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Centre Plaza Cinema
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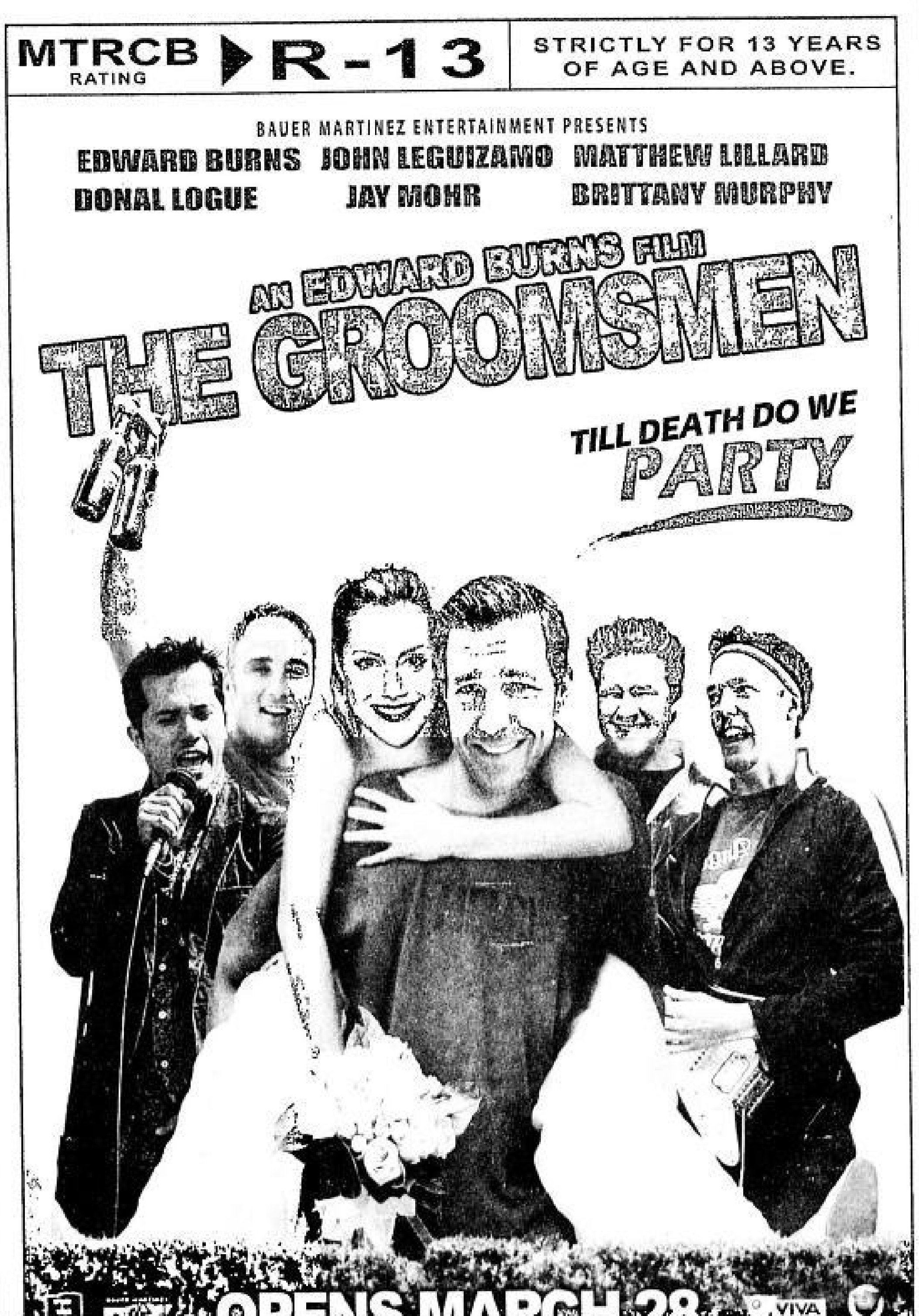

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ITEM 01 - beach resort w/ admin bldg.restaurant, swimming pool, five 2-room cottages & four room cottage w/c were given salvage value
Lot Area: 24,385 00 sqm
Floor Area: Building 396, Rest 518, Pool 300, Duplex 410, 4-room cottage 368 sqm.
Bil-isan, Panglao
Market Value: 43,000,000 00
Min. Bid Price: 36 000 000 00

CEBU

ITEM 02 - beach resort, improved w/ single-storey guest room, 2-storey admin/office, 2-storeyguest house(lot 2), 2-storeyduplex type guest house, res-taurant, CHB fence, swimmingpool, 2-storey guest house(giftshop).
2-storey guest room
Lot Area: 9,506 00 sqm.
Marigondon, Suba-Basbas
Market Value: 58,000,000 00
Min. Bid Price: 50,000,000 00

ITEM 03 - Commercial Lots with 9-storey bldg.
3-storey warehouse
Lot Area: 7,046.00 sqm.
P.Remedios Street, Brgy Banilad
Market Value: 125,000,000 00
Min. Bid Price: 93,750,000.00

ITEM 04 - Residential Lot
Lot Area: 379.00 sqm.
Lot 3, Blk-1 Singson Blvd., Guadalupe
Market Value: 1,980,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,530,000 00

ITEM 05 - Condominium Unit
Lot Area: 127 00 sqm.
22Nd Floor, Unit 5, Tower A. Winland Towers Condominium Capitol Site
Market Value: 3,300,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,700 000.00

ITEM 06 - Vacant Residential Lot
Lot Area: 160.00 sqm.
Cebu Pyramid Subdivision
Market Value: 67,584 00
Minimum Bid Price: 49,152.00

ITEM 07 - Vacant Residential Lot
Lot Area 732.00 sqm
Lot 548 Brgy Opao
Market Value: 825,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 637,500.00

ITEM 08 - Vacant Residential Lot
Lot Area: 518.00 sqm.
Brgy. Pagsabungan
Market Value: 770,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 595,000.00

ITEM 09 - Residential Lot, improved w/ 2-storey residential building
Lot Area: 250.00 sqm.
Lot 3 Villa Quijano, Forest Hills
Market Value: 2,640,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,160,000.00

ITEM 010 - Vacant Residential Lot
Lot Area: 400.00 sqm.
Lots 3 & 4, Blk-2 Villa Quijano, Forest Hills
Market Value: 2,200,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,800,000.00

ITEM 11 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,832 00 sqm.
Lot 18426 San Carlos Heights, Pardo, Cebu City
Market Value: 4,248,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 3,186,000.00

ITEM 12 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 150.00 sqm.
Lot 2 Block 24 Wisteria Lane, South Hills Subd., Labangon, Cebu City
Market Value: 675,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 641,000.00

ITEM 13 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 6,657.00 sqm.
Lot 18680 San Carlos Heights, Pardo, Cebu City
Market Value: 3,115,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,800,000.00

ITEM 14 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area. 533.00 sqm.
Lot 1319-B-2C-20 Near Laguerta Road, Lahug, Cebu City
Market Value 692,900.00
Minimum Bid Price: 554,000.00

ITEM 15 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 460 00 sqm.
Lot 26-D Block 21, South Hills Subd., Tisa, Cebu City
Market Value: 1,840,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,380,000.00

ITEM 16 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,276 00 sqm
Lot 5756-A Along Cebu South Road, Basak San Nicolas, Cebu City
Market Value: 6,380,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 3,509,000 00

ITEM 17 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 612 00 sqm.
Lots 70 & 71 Road Lot 83, Sabang, Danao City
Market Value: 1,705,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,646,843 28

ITEM 18 - LOT WITH MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,038 00 sqm.
Lot 4374-D-1 & 4374-D-2 Sitio Soong, Brgy. Mactan, Lapulapu City
Market Value. 3,261,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,827,779 60

ITEM 19 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 232.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 176.00 sqm.
Lot 837C-2-C-2 Hermag Village, Basak, Mandaue City
Market Value: 1,500,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,200,000 00

ITEM 20 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
Floor Area. 250 00 sqm.
Lot 2306-D Sitio Pangpang, San Isidro, Talisay City
Market Value: 900,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 720,000.00

ITEM 21 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 253.00 sqm.
Floor Area. 660.00 sqm.
Lot3286-B-I-A Tabunok Public Market, Tabunok, Talisay City
Market Value: 6,255,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 6,255,000 00

EASTERN SAMAR

ITEM 22 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 240 00 sqm.
Floor Area 258 00 sqm.
Pag-Asa St., Karapdapan, Arteche, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 98,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 88,000.00

ITEM 23 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 1,244.00 sqm
Lot 19312 Brgy., Sta. Fe, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 19,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 14,000 00

ITEM 24 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 149.00 sqm.
Lot 8809, Brgy., Libutan, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 75,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 71,000 00

ITEM 25 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 239 00 sqm.
Lot 21129, National Road, Brgy., Labunan, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 120,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 108,000.00

ITEM 26 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,611.00 sqm.
Lot 17184, National Road, Brgy. Bugas, Borongan Eastern Samar
Market Value: 47,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 38,000 00

ITEM 27 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area. 2,038 00 sqm
Lot 2169, Brgy. Campesao, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 186,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 130,000.00

ITEM 28 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 757.00 sqm.
2080-A Interior San Pedro St., Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 265,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 225,000.00

ITEM 29 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 70,412.00 sqm.
Lot 9553 / 9548 / 9568 / 11379 Brgy.Maiha, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 49,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 34,000 00

ITEM 30 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area. 457.00 sqm.
17160 National Road, Maglitad, Bugas, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 183,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 165,000 00

ITEM 31 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 446 00 sqm.
Lot 2189 Bgy. Carolina Can-Avid, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 178,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 169,000 00

ITEM 32 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,111.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 202.00 sqm.
Lot 7-B National Road, Brgy. Lunang, Dolores, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 1,440,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,152,000.00

ITEM 33 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 140.00 sqm.
3449 Carolina St., Brgy.12 Dolores, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 70,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 56,000 00

ITEM 35 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 984.00 sqm.
3445-A Carolina St., Dolores, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 197,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 138,000.00

ITEM 36 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,850.00 sqm.
Lot 998. Pls-774-D Real St., Extesion, Dolores, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 570,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 485,000.00

ITEM 37 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 101.92 sqm.
Lot 070 National Road/ Concepcion/San Roque Sts., Paya, Gporis, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 25,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 24,000 00

ITEM 38 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 400 00 sqm.
3933 Brgy. Bagoiro, Camada, Maydolong, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 40,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 38,000.00

ITEM 39 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 237.00 sqm.
3029 Brgy.Nena, San Julian, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 71,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 67,000 00

ITEM 40 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 37,000.00 sqm.
Brgy. Calupad & Pangpang, Sn Policarpio Eastern Samar
Market Value: 36,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 27,000 00

LEYTE

ITEM 41 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 43,023 00 sqm.
Lot 10042 Brgy. Pitogo, Barugo, Leyte
Market Value: 65,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 49,000.00

ITEM 42 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 197.00 sqm.
Lot 029 Tres Martires St., Baybay, Leyte
Market Value: 1,379,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,172,000.00

ITEM 43 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 851.00 sqm.
Lot 771-D M.L. Quezon St., Baybay, Leyte
Market Value: 1,702,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,362,000.00

ITEM 44 - COMMERCIAL
Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
Floor Area 492.00 sqm.
Lot 328-B M.L. Quezon St., Baybay, Leyte
Market Value: 3,407,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 3,237,000.00

ITEM 045 - Industrial/ Commercial Lot
Lot Area: 5,575.00 sqm.
Lot 659 Along R. Magsaysay Avenue
Market Value: 11,038,500 00
Minimum Bid Price: 8,628,000.00

ITEM 46 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area. 2,025 00 sqm.
Lot 10558 P. Carillo St., Ponong District, Carigara, Leyte
Market Value: 1,199,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 839,000 00

ITEM 47 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 745.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 89.00 sqm.
Lot 205-D-1 & 205-D-5 San Miguel St., Javier, Leyte
Market Value: 291,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 233,000 00

ITEM 48 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 178,796 00 sqm.
Lot 10661 Interior Brgy., Montealegre,Kananga, Leyte
Market Value: 715,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 501,000 00

ITEM 49 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 115,058 00 sqm
Lot Nos. 12360/12039/12359 Interior Brgy.,Montealegre, Kananga, Leyte
Market Value: 460,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 345,000.00

ITEM 50 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 218 00 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 65,400 00
Minimum Bid Price: 56,000.00

ITEM 51 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 226.00 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 67,800 00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000 00

ITEM 52 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 204 00 sqm
Lot 3 Blk.-14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 40,800 00
Minimum Bid Price: 35,000.00

ITEM 53 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 204 00 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 40,800 00
Minimum Bid Price 35,000.00

ITEM 54 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 204.00 sqm
Lot 5 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value 40,800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 35,000.00

ITEM 55 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 294.00 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 58,800 00
Minimum Bid Price: 50,000.00

ITEM 56 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 3,551.00 sqm.
Lot#54-A,N.Vivero St.(Former Calle Cinco).La Paz.Leyte
Market Value: 533,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 373,000 00

ITEM 57 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 160 00 sqm.
Poblacion, Mahaplag, Leyte
Market Value: 48,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 41,000 00

ITEM 58 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 342.00 sqm
Floor Area: 200 00 sqm.
Cor Rizal & Magsaysay St., Pob., Mahaplag, Leyte
Market Value: 831,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 665,000 00

ITEM 59 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 856 00 sqm.
Lot 5210-E-4 & Lot 5210-E-17 Interior Road Lot,Brgy Linao,Ormoc City
Market Value: 559,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 447,000 00

ITEM 60 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 597.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 379 00 sqm
Lot 1&2 Blk 15 Berlin St.,Cor.Washington, Dona Felisa Mejia Subdivision,Ormoc City
Market Value: 2,045,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,534,000.00

ITEM 61 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,741 00 sqm.
Floor Area: 475.00 sqm.
Lot 2-M-2 Sto Nino Ave., Cor Washington St, Dona Felisa Mejia Subd., Brgy Cogon, Ormoc City
Market Value: 5,686,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 4,265,000.00

ITEM 62 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 2,121 00 sqm
Lot 8409-A-6 Framcisco Tan St., Valencia,Ormoc City
Market Value: 742,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 631,000 00

ITEM 63 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 109.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 159 00 sqm.
Lot 1 & 2 Capt. G. Alfaro St., Brgy. San Jose, San Juan, Leyte
Market Value: 641,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 609,000 00

ITEM 64 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 214.18 sqm
Lot 447 Corner Of Roxas And Del Pilar Sts., Tabontabon, Leyte
Market Value: 42,836 00
Minimum Bid Price: 39,000.00

ITEM 65 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area. 200 46 sqm.
Lot 446 Corner Of Roxas And Del Pilar Sts., Tabontabon, Leyte
Market Value 40,092.00
Minimum Bid Price 36,000 00

ITEM 66 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 213 68 sqm.
Lot 445 Corner Of Roxas And Del Pilar Sts, Tabontabon, Leyte
Market Value 42,736 00
Minimum Bid Price: 38,000 00

ITEM 67 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 221.77 sqm
Lot 444 Corner Of Roxas And Del Pilar Sts., Tabontabon, Leyte
Market Value. 44,354 00
Minimum Bid Price 40,000 00

ITEM 68 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 112 00 sqm
Lot 517-A-4 Interior Sta.Cruz & Salazar Sts.,Quarry District,Tacloban City
Market Value 168,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 126,000 00

ITEM 69 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 759 00 sqm.
Floor Area: 210.00 sqm.
Lot 2910-B Caibaan Road, Tacloban City
Market Value: 1,905,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 1,619,000.00

ITEM 70 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 432 00 sqm.
Lot 1950-C2-B4-B Nat'L. Road Cor Subd. Road, Brgy 87 Camacho Subd., Manlurip, San Jose, Tacloban City
Market Value: 518,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 466,000 00

ITEM 71 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 224 00 sqm.
Floor Area: 252.00 sqm.
Lot 5596-C-1 113-C, Interior Of P. Gomez St., Brgy. 21, Tacloban City
Market Value: 2,447,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,958,000 00

ITEM 72 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 319 00 sqm.
Floor Area 74 00 sqm.
Lot 1383-A 2Nd St., Rimas Paraiso, San Jose, Tacloban City
Market Value 667,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 467,000.00

ITEM 73 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 12,054 00 sqm.
Lot 4237-N Brgy. 93, Bagacay, Tacloban City
Market Value: 2,765,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,350 000 00

ITEM 74 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,903.00 sqm.
1098-A-2 Tabo-An, Marasbaras, Tacloban City
Market Value: 476,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 333,000 00

ITEM 75 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,642.00 sqm.
Lot 918-E / 918-C / 918-A Brgy 62 Purok 3 Sagkahan Tacloban City.
Market Value: 821,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 493 000 00

ITEM 76 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 3,172 00 sqm.
Lot 2969 (Interior) Calanipawan, Tacloban City
Market Value: 1,586,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 1,110,000 00

ITEM 77 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 535 00 sqm.
Floor Area 220 00 sqm.
Lot 1379 San Jose St., Tacloban City
Market Value: 2,111,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 689 000 00

ITEM 78 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 278 00 sqm.
Floor Area: 186.00 sqm.
Lot 1115 Corner Buenavista & Don Dionisio Sts., Tanauan, Leyte
Market Value: 176,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 158,000 00

ITEM 79 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 279 00 sqm.
Floor Area. 140 00 sqm.
Lot#3811 Brgy.Quilao,Tolosa,Leyte
Market Value. 1,210,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,089,000 00

ITEM 080 - Residential Lot w/ 2-storey residential building, bakery & perimeter fence
Lot Area: 813.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 2 storey Bldg 120 00 (1/F) 30 00(2/F) 144sqm/ Bakery
Brgy Rizal, Basak, Tuburan, Maasin City
Market Value: 1,650,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 1,200 000 00

SAMAR

ITEM 81 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 191 00 sqm
Floor Area 273 00 sqm.
Lot No. 22 No. 110, 112, 114 Int. Of Mabiniave., Poblacion, Catbalogan, Samar
Market Value: 1,698,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,358,000.00

ITEM 82 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 638 00 sqm.
Lot 17 Brgy. Canlapwas, Catbalogan, Samar
Market Value: 96,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 58,000 00

ITEM 83 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area. 575 00 sqm.
Lot 3771 Brgy Road, Brgy. Buenavista I, San Jorge, Samar
Market Value 86,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 60 000 00

BACOLOD

ITEM 084 - Eight (8) lots w/ 2-storey residential building
Lot Area: 1,956.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 394.00(1/F) 153.00(2/F) sqm.
109-110 Greenplains Subd., Brgy Singcang, Bacolod
Market Value 8,250,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 6,000,000 00

ADDITIONAL PROPERTIES

ITEM 085 - COMMERCIAL LOT
Lot Area: 850.50 sqm.
Lot 21 Humabon Ave., 4th Street, Cebu Port Center
Market Value. 11,500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 10,000,000.00

CEBU/ BOHOL REGIONAL DESK

(VICENTE & CECILLE) Tel. No. (032) 412-1883 CEBU Branch: Tel. No. ((032) 253-8537
TACLOBAN Branch: Tel. No. (053) 523-3611 & (053) 321-9555

DAVAO

MARCH 29, 2007 • THURSDAY • 2:00 PM • GRAND REGAL HOTEL Km.7, J.P. Laurel Avenue, Bajada, Davao City

COMPOSTELA VALLEY

ITEM 1 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A: 801 sqm.
L1795 Purok 8, Papaya St., Monkayo
Market Value 64,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 48,000 00

ITEM 2 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A: 800 sqm.
Lot 2375 Judge Cruz St., Monkayo
Market Value: 64,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 48,000 00

ITEM 3 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 800.30 sqm.
Lot 2093 No. 077 Glenn Kerr St., Pob., Monkayo
Market Value: 384,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 307,000 00

ITEM 4 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan, Montevista
Market Value: 24,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 19,000 00

ITEM 5 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista
Market Value: 24,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 19,000.00

ITEM 6 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 15 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan, Montevista Com-Postela Valley
Market Value 24,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 19,000.00

ITEM 7 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 400 sqm.
Lot 19 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan, Montevista
Market Value. 32,000.00
Minimum Bid Price. 26,000 00

ITEM 8 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 400 sqm.
Lot 20 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan, Montevista
Market Value 32,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 26,000.00

ITEM 9 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 400 sqm.
Lot 22 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan, Montevista Com-Postela Valley
Market Value 32,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 26 000 00

ITEM 10 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 400 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk 13 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan, Montevista
Market Value 32,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 24,000 00

ITEM 11 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 400 sqm
Lot 18 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts Km 100, Linoan, Montevista
Market Value 32,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 26,000 00

ITEM 12 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 3,761 sqm F. A.: 128 sqm
Lot 1526-B Purok 5,Pagakpak Pantukan
Market Value: 914 000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 777 000 00

ITEM 13 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 172 sqm F. A.: 113 sqm.
Lot 18 Dao St. Poblacion Maco, Comval Province
Market Value 209 000 00
Minimum Bid Price 157 000 00

DAVAO DEL NORTE

ITEM 14 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm. F. A: 327 sqm.
Lot 2529 Purok 2, Roxas Ave., Poblacion New Corella
Market Value. 564,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 423,000 00

ITEM 15 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 1864 Magsaysay Ave., Purok 5, New Corella
Market Value 70,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 56,000 00

ITEM 16 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm
Lot 1518 Magsaysay Ave., Pob New Corella, Davao Del Norte
Market Value 80 000.00
Minimum Bid Price 64,000 00

ITEM 17 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 338 sqm F. A. 69 sqm
Lot 1089-B-5-D-6-E Purok 6, Pob New Corella
Market Value 206,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 165,000 00

ITEM 18 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A: 774 sqm. F. A.: 314 sqm.
Lot 1090-B-2-C-6-A & 1090-B-2-6-B Romualdez Extn. St., New Corella
Market Value: 550,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 440 000.00

ITEM 19 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm
Lot 1865 Magsay-Say Ave. Purok 5 New Corella
Market Value 80,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 64,000.00

ITEM 20 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 2112 Fr. Gomez St., Poblacion, New Corella
Market Value. 70,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 56,000.00

ITEM 21 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 707 sqm.
Lot 2526, Along Irig St., New Corella
Market Value: 57,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 46,000.00

ITEM 22 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,412 sqm
Lots 2292 & 2291 Bonifacio St. Pob New Corella
Market Value: 92,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 74,000 00

ITEM 023 - Agricultural Lot
L. A.: 20,891 sqm.
Purok 18, Brgy Cuambugan, Mesaoy
Market Value: 313,365 00
Minimum Bid Price. 412,500 00

ITEM 25 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 250 sqm. F. A.: 48 sqm.
Lot 6441-C-5-D-5-M-1 Purok 3, Duran Vill., San Miguel, Tagum City
Market Value 298,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 224 000 00

ITEM 26 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 769 sqm. F. A.: 271 sqm.
Lot 588-D-5 Bermudez Subd., Apokon, Tagum City
Market Value 992,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 843,000 00

ITEM 27 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 170 sqm. F. A.: 177 sqm.
Lot 7-B-2-A Purok Malinawon, Zafra Subd., Briz Dist., Tagum City
Market Value 618,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 464 000 00

ITEM 28 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 344 sqm F. A.: 206 sqm.
Lot 406-G-2-B-3-B-3-B-1-A Purok Durian, Seminary Drive, Tagum City
Market Value 884,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 663,000 00

ITEM 29 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 1,004 sqm F. A.: 75 sqm
Lots 4488-D-1 & 4488-D-2 Purok 1. Rizal, Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value 555 000 00
Minimum Bid Price 416 000 00

ITEM 30 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A: 500 sqm
Lot 708-6 Manga I-B, Purok Bayanihan, Visayan Vil., Tagum City
Market Value: 700,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 525,000 00

ITEM 31 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 58 Narzal Con-Concepcion Subd. Upr La Union, Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value 86,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 69,000.00

ITEM 32 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,100 sqm
Lot 488-F-4-C-4-B-1 Gante Rd. 3, Tagum City
Market Value 770,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 616,000 00

ITEM 33 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 485 sqm.
Lot 387-G-15 D. Mencidor Subd., Tipaz, Tagum City
Market Value 170,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 102,000.00

ITEM 34 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 515 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 129 000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 103 000.00

ITEM 35 - VACANT LOT
L. A 500 sqm.
L3 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St. Canocotan. Tagum City
Market Value: 125,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 100 000 00

ITEM 36 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm.
L4 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125 000 00
Minimum Bid Price 100 000 00

ITEM 37 - VACANT LOT
L. A 500 sqm.
L5 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 100 000 00

ITEM 38 - VACANT LOT
L. A. 500 sqm.
L9 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan. Tagum City
Market Value. 125,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 100,000 00

ITEM 39 - VACANT LOT
L. A 514 sqm.
L2 B5 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 128,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 103 000 00

ITEM 40 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 500 sqm
L6 B6 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 100 000 00

ITEM 41 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm.
L7 B6 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value 125,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 100 000 00

ITEM 42 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 517 sqm.
L14 B5 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St. Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value 129,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 103,000 00

ITEM 43 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 209 sqm
Lot 14 Blk 10 Purok 00, Nonjam Subd., La Filipina, Tagum City
Market Value: 73,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000.00

ITEM 44 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 425 sqm.
Lot 15 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value 68,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 54 000 00

ITEM 45 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 425 sqm
Lot 16 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value 68 000 00
Minimum Bid Price 54,000.00

ITEM 46 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 425 sqm.
Lot 11 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 68,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 54,000.00

ITEM 47 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 459 sqm.
Lot 10 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value 80,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 64,000.00

ITEM 48 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 308 sqm.
Lot 9 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 54,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 43,000.00

ITEM 49 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm.
Lot 35 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value 72,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 58 000.00

ITEM 50 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm.
Lot 34 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 72,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 58 000 00

ITEM 51 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 73 Narzal Concepcion Subd., Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value 72,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 58 000.00

ITEM 52 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm.
Lot 74 Narzal Concepcion Subd., Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 58,000.00

ITEM 53 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 448 sqm
Lot 77 Narzal Concepcion Subd., Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value 78,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 62,000.00

ITEM 54 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm.
Lot 76 Narzal Concepcion Subd., Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value 72,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000 00

ITEM 55 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 448 sqm
Lot 78 Narzal Concepcion Subd, Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value 78,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 62,000.00

ITEM 56 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 450 sqm.
Lot 75 Narzal Concepcion Subd., Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value 72,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 58,000 00

DAVAO DEL SUR

ITEM 057 - Residential Lots
L. A 2,619 sqm
Cabantian, Buhangin
Market Value: 1,309,500 00
Minimum Bid Price 209,520 00

ITEM 58 - VACANT LOT
L. A 10,092 sqm
Lot 945-B, Sitio Escuela Bula, Catalunan Grande, Talomo District, Davao City
Market Value: 606,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 424,000 00

ITEM 59 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 4,800 sqm.
Lot 536-A-2 Interior, Tigatto, Buhangin District. Davao City
Market Value: 2,880,000 00
Minimum Bid Price:
1,584 000 00

ITEM 60 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 245 sqm.
Lot 8 Blk 3 Hinundayan Homes, Dumoy, Toril, Davao City
Market Value 417,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 396 000 00

ITEM 61 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A 134 sqm
Lot 5 No 83 Buhangin Road, Buhangin Dist., Davao City
Market Value 536 000 00
Minimum Bid Price 402,000 00

ITEM 62 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 500 sqm.
Lot 28 Interior Indangan, Buhangin Dist., Davao City
Market Value: 125,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 94,000 00

ITEM 063 - Commercial Lot w/ 3-storey bldg
L. A.: 5,090 sqm.
Lot B-2 Home Essentials, J P Laurel Ave.
Market Value 49,144,000.00
Minimum Bid Price
41 400 000 00

ITEM 064 - Vacant Residential/ Industrial lot
L. A.: 9,200 sqm.
Lot 16 Int. Pareñas St., Diversion Rd. Km 8, Bo Cabantian, Buhangin
Market Value 5,520,000.00
Minimum Bid Price
3,910,000 00

ITEM 065 - Agricultural Lot
L. A 9,200 sqm.
16 Interior Pareñas St., Diversion Road, Km 8 Buhangin
Market Value. 5,617,240 00
Minimum Bid Price:
3,910,000 00

ITEM 66 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 10,000 sqm.
Lot 2-A Tresa De Mayo, Digos City
Market Value: 2,000,000.00
Minimum Bid Price
1,600,000 00

ITEM 67 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A: 726 sqm. F. A. 386 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 6 Del Pilar St., Digos City
Market Value: 1,623,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
1,380 000 00

ITEM 68 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 4,940 sqm.
Lot 12-G-9-F Subd. Road. Cagape Subd., San Jose, Digos City
Market Value 2,470,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
1,976 000 00

ITEM 69 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 198 sqm.
Lot 17 Blk. 7 Ruparan, Digos City
Market Value 39,600 00
Minimum Bid Price 32,000 00

ITEM 70 - AGRILAND
L. A.: 49,891 sqm
Lot 2154, Cad 275 Pitong Gatang Sinawilan
Market Value 490 000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 368 000 00

ITEM 71 - LOT WITH MINOR IMPVT.
L. A: 1,795 sqm.
Lot 5777-I-10 Poblacion Sulop
Market Value 459 000 00
Minimum Bid Price 367 000 00

DAVAO ORIENTAL

ITEM 72 - AGRILAND
L. A.: 10,000 sqm
Lot 3470-B, Psd-11-001623 Bo Bagsak,Banaybanay
Market Value 240,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 180,000 00

ITEM 73 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 1,039 sqm. F. A.: 153 sqm.
Lot 5 Brgy. Piso, Banay-Banay
Market Value: 719,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 575,000 00

ITEM 74 - AGRILAND
L. A: 42,008 sqm
Lot 2435-A Brgy. Ilangay. Lupon
Market Value 840 000 00
Minimum Bid Price 672,000.00

ITEM 75 - AGRILAND
L. A: 50 000 sqm.
Lot 2515-B Brgy., Ilangay, Lupon
Market Value 1,000,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 700 000 00

ITEM 76 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 2,231 sqm. F. A.: 293 sqm.
Lot No. 1 Comara St., Pob., Lupon
Market Value: 1,991,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
1,593 000 00

ITEM 77 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 790 sqm.
Lot 1579-A Along National Highway,San Ignacio,Manay
Market Value 218 000 00
Minimum Bid Price 185,000 00

ITEM 78 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A: 288 sqm.
Lot 281-C Bato St.,Pob Manay
Market Value 346,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 311 000 00

ITEM 79 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A. 15,791 sqm.
Lot 464 Lawigan, Mati
Market Value 71,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 46,000 00

ITEM 80 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 378 sqm.
L1 Blk 2 Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value 113,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 85,000 00

ITEM 81 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 2,821 sqm.
Lot D-4-B Interco Drive, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 762,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 572,000 00

ITEM 82 - VACANT LOT
L. A. 888 sqm
Lot-2-D-7-1 Madang, Bo Of Central Mati
Market Value 443,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 355,000 00

ITEM 83 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A. 524 sqm. F. A.: 532 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 14 Sto Nino, Poblacion Mati
Market Value 4,019,000 00
Minimum Bid Price:
2,612,000 00

ITEM 84 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,551 sqm.
Lot 6424, 5324-A & 5364-H Lower Apayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value 453,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 362,000 00

ITEM 85 - VACANT LOT
L. A. 486 sqm
Lot 1777-J Lower Apayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 131,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 105,000 00

ITEM 86 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A. 179 sqm F. A.: 148 sqm.
Lot 3814-I-3 Along Don S. Garcia St., Upper Salazar, Mati
Market Value 346,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 311,000.00

ITEM 87 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 221 sqm
Lot 8 Blk 14 Sibala Village, Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value 55,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 44,000 00

ITEM 88 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 499 sqm.
Lot 1777-H Road Lot 1777-T Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value 135,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 108,000.00

ITEM 89 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 499 sqm
Lot 1777-G Road Lot 1777-T Lower Kapayas, Matiao. Mati
Market Value 135,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 108,000 00

ITEM 90 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 216 sqm
Lot 6 Blk 14 Sibala Village, Lower Kapayas. Matiao, Mati
Market Value 54,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 43,000 00

ITEM 91 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 2,104 sqm.
Lot 4-L-2-I Adjacent To Lopez Village Subd., Matiao, Mati
Market Value 631,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 442,000 00

ITEM 92 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 240 sqm. F. A.: 173 sqm.
Lot 18 & 19 Blk 3 Camia St., Don Luis Village, Madang, Mati
Market Value: 557,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 418,000 00

ITEM 93 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 448 sqm.
Lot D-7-G Purok Malambo-On, Interior Interco Drive Matiao
Market Value. 99,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 79,000 00

ITEM 94 - VACANT LOT
L. A. 499 sqm.
Lot 1777-I Lower Kapayas,Matiao,Mati
Market Value 115,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 98,000 00

ITEM 95 - VACANT LOT
L. A. 499 sqm
Lot 1777-B Lower Kapayas,Matiao,Mati
Market Value. 150,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 120,000 00

ITEM 96 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 440 sqm
Lot 5369-A Lower Kapayas,Matiao,Mati
Market Value 135,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 115,000 00

ITEM 97 - VACANT LOT
L. A. 292 sqm
Lot 8 Blk 16 Sibala Village Lower Kapayas,Matiao,Mati
Market Value 82,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 70,000.00

ITEM 98 - VACANT LOT
L. A 399 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 36 Madang,Bo Of Central Mati
Market Value 259,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 220 000 00

ITEM 99 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 464 sqm
Lot 600-B-2-G-1 Interior Dabcor Road,Matiao,Mati
Market Value 211,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 137,000 00

ITEM 100 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 20,000 sqm.
Lot 1-B & D Upper Kapayas,Don Martin Marundan,Matiao,Mati
Market Value. 1,312,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 984,000 00

ITEM 101 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 223 sqm
Lot 19 Blk 12 Sibala Village, Lower Kapayas,Matiao,Mati
Market Value 56,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 45,000 00

ITEM 102 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm.
Lot 1777-O Lower Kapayas Matiao,Mati
Market Value: 150,000.00
Minimum Bid Price 120,000 00

ITEM 103 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 695-B-25 Rizal St.Limatoc Mati
Market Value: 1,417,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
1,275,000 00

ITEM 104 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 609 sqm
Lot 5312-E Interior Lot W/O Rrow Purok Pakkaisama,Pahamutang Road, Matiao, Mati
Market Value 120,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 66,000 00

ITEM 105 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 238 sqm.
Lot 2-D-7-G Subd. Rd, Madang, Mati
Market Value 119,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 95,000 00

ITEM 106 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 303-C-6-C Lemente Village Calagundian, Mati
Market Value 120,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 120 000 00

ITEM 107 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm.
Lot 28 Blk 4 Madang, Bo Of Central Mati
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 65,000 00

ITEM 108 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 5 Jasmin St., Don Luis Vill., Mati
Market Value 72,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000 00

ITEM 109 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm.
Lot 18 Blk 6 Jasmin St., Don Luis Vill., Mati
Market Value 72,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 58,000 00

ITEM 110 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm.
Lot 28 Blk 6 Road Lot A, Don Luis Vill., Mati
Market Value: 66,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 53,000 00

ITEM 111 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm.
Lot 29 Blk 8 Camia St., Don Luis Vill., Mati
Market Value: 72,000 00
Minimum Bid Price 58,000 00

ITEM 112 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 292 sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 35 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 161,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 129,000.00

ITEM 113 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 282 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 35 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 169,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 135,000 00

ITEM 114 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 349 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk 29 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value 209,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 178,000.00

ITEM 115 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 542 sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 27 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 217,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 174,000 00

ITEM 116 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 448 sqm.
Lot 15 Blk 32 Madang,Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 246,000 00
Minimum Bid Price: 209,000 00

ITEM 117 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 433 sqm.
Lot 15 Blk 26 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 397,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 318,000 00

ITEM 118 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 281 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk.12 Sibala Village, Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 75,870.00
Minimum Bid Price: 65,000 00

ITEM 119 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 269 sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 12 Sibala Village, Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati,
Market Value: 72,630.00
Minimum Bid Price. 62,000.00

ITEM 120 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 805 sqm.
Lot 1776-C-2-B-2-E Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 242,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 206,000 00

ITEM 121 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 545 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 2 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 163,500 00
Minimum Bid Price: 139,000 00

ITEM 122 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 579 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk. 2 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 173,700 00
Minimum Bid Price. 148,000.00

ITEM 123 - VACANT LOT
L. A: 380 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk.1 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 114,000 00
Minimum Bid Price. 97,000.00

ITEM 124 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 336 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 1 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value 100,800 00
Minimum Bid Price 86,000 00

ITEM 125 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 336 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk 1 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 100,800.00
Minimum Bid Price. 86,000 00

ITEM 126 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 285 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 8 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value. 71,250 00
Minimum Bid Price: 61,000 00

ITEM 127 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 231 sqm
Lot 2 Blk.8 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 57,750 00
Minimum Bid Price 49,000 00

ITEM 128 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 238 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 8 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value. 59,500.00
Minimum Bid Price: 51,000.00

ITEM 129 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 419 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 8 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 104,750.00
Minimum Bid Price:
89 000 00

ITEM 130 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 266 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 5 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 66,500 00
Minimum Bid Price:
57 000 00

ITEM 131 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 210 sqm
Lot 2 Blk 5 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 52,500 00
Minimum Bid Price:
45,000 00

ITEM 132 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 210 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 5 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 52,500.00
Minimum Bid Price:
45,000 00

ITEM 133 - VACANT LOT
L. A. 852 sqm.
Lot 634-E Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 128 000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
109,000.00

ITEM 134 - VACANT LOT
L. A 300 sqm
Lot 634-A-5
Kapayas Matiao, Mati
Market Value 60,000 00
Minimum Bid Price:
51,000 00

ITEM 135 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 634-A-6
Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value 60,000 00
Minimum Bid Price:
51,000 00

ITEM 136 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 634-A-7
Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 60,000 00
Minimum Bid Price:
51,000 00

ITEM 137 - VACANT LOT
L. A. 300 sqm.
Lot 634-A-8
Kapayas Matiao, Mati
Market Value 60,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
51,000 00

ITEM 138 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 634-A-9
Kapayas Matiao, Mati
Market Value 60,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
51 000 00

ITEM 139 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 299 sqm.
Lot 634-A-10
Kapayas Matiao, Mati
Market Value 59,800.00
Minimum Bid Price:
51 000 00

ITEM 0140 - agricultural lot
L. A.: 50,000 sqm.
Don Lusilo Rabat Ave., Magapo
Market Value:
15,000,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
11,250,000 00

ITEM 0141 - commercial lot w/ 2-storey, commercial bldg
L. A.: 312 sqm.
F. A.: 2-storey Bldg 206.79 (G/F) 184.19 (2/F) sqm.
Lot 71 Corner Mabini-Burgos Sts., Central Mati
Market Value. 2,351,784.00
Minimum Bid Price:
1,840,000 00

ITEM 0142 - residential lots
L. A. 500 sqm.
Lot B Unnamed Road Lot, Espino Subd, Bo Dumoy, Davao City
Market Value 500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
400,000 00

ITEM 0143 - residential lots
L. A.: 500 sqm.
Lot C Unnamed Road Lot, Espino Subd, Bo Dumoy, Davao City
Market Value: 500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
400 000 00

ITEM 0144 - residential lots
L. A. 500 sqm.
Lot D Unnamed Road Lot, Espino Subd, Bo Dumoy, Davao City
Market Value: 500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price:
400,000 00

ITEM 0145 - Commercial Lot w/ 2-storey, Comm'l Bldg.
L. A.: 312 sqm.
71 Cor Mabini-Burgos Sts., Central, Mati
Market Value: 936 000 00
Minimum Bid Price:
1,840,000 00

SULTAN KUDARAT

ITEM 0146 - Adjacent Lot
L. A.: 250 sqm.
17 Proposed Intong Subd Near Belsario Subd, Intong
Market Value. 176,100 00
Minimum Bid Price:
240,000.00

ITEM 0147 - Adjacent Lot
L. A.: 250 sqm.
18 Proposed Intong Subd Near Belsario Subd, Intong
Market Value: 176,100.00
Minimum Bid Price:
240,000 00

ITEM 0148 - Adjacent Lot
L. A.: 250 sqm.
19 Proposed Intong Subd Near Belsario Subd, Intong
Market Value: 176,100.00
Minimum Bid Price:
240,000.00

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Hugh Grant, the world's wittie

Do you prefer red or white wine?

I'm more of a red wine drinker. White wine does strange things to me. I get the heebie-jeebies. Do you ever get that? In the middle of the night, suddenly you feel like, I've got to go for a long run now. I don't know what that is.

In ["Music & Lyrics"], two people stuck in their lives get to move on when they find each other. Have you ever felt stuck in your life and what kept you moving?

Even at this moment in my life, I've been trying for so many years to write this book. You know that I have quite a strong girlfriend who shakes me like a rat and says just get on with it and pretty much holds a gun to my head. I have managed to actually write some pages. It does need a big outside influence.

Is that what you need in your life, a strong hand?

That's what I like, yes (laughter).

Can you elaborate on the appeal of a strong woman to you?

I don't know the secret to any of this stuff. I expect it has all to do with one's mother. My mother was quite a strong woman. I find that men who have strong mothers get quite attracted to strong women.

India is all abuzz about Elizabeth Hurley's wedding. Were you invited?

I don't think many people, when they get married, invite their ex. So I am not at all bitter. There's no bad feeling or weirdness.

Can you tell us more about this book that you are trying to write?

It's an idea I actually had 18 years ago. I have been making notes. The fact is, I'm not entirely sure what the story is yet. I'm 60 pages in. I don't know where we're going but I quite like that. I know who the lead character is, what the style is and what the tone is.

This is a line from the movie: "Inspiration is for amateurs." What do you think of that?

I like that quote. I think that's a really good lesson. I must say when I sit there trying to write this book, on days when nothing comes, I often think of that and everyone will tell you the same. Every professional writer always says you just go on even on the bad days. I think that's a good lesson in life actually.

Is the book completely fiction or is it semi-autobiographical?

What I've done is take all the worst as-

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st 'miserable' man

From page 12

pects of myself and extrapolate them wildly into this monster. So I've created this really chilling and depressing anti-hero (laughter) and that's the main character.

Are you already in talks with a publisher?

Sometimes from interviews like this, it leaks out that I'm thinking of writing a book. Then I get a little deluge of letters from publishers but the problem with that whole celebrity publishing thing is that they publish almost anything.

But they give you an advance fee. Wouldn't that be an incentive for you?

I am not sure. I don't really know how advances work. I've got a nasty feeling that I wouldn't really care if I missed the deadline so I think I'd rather march to my own drum on this one.

In our last conference with you, you were very guarded with your answers and very much afraid of being misinterpreted. This time, you are answering freely. What brought on this change?

Nothing. Honestly, it's just mood. I can't explain it like this has been a three-day junket. First day I was sweetness and charm; the second morning, for no reason at all I was a monster. Couldn't bear to speak to anyone. I don't know how I am going to be from moment to moment. Schizophrenic.

What causes you to be in a bad mood?

I don't know. My liver perhaps (laughter).

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.

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INVITATION TO BID

The Asset Management Sector of the Philippine National Bank (PNB) is inviting bidders to purchase by way of sealed bids in cash or installment and on "As-is Where-is" basis the following residential / commercial properties in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan Valley :

1) 3-storey building with extension located at Del Rosario street, Tuguegarao City; lot area 914 sqm, improvements 818 sqm; minimum bid price at **Php12,100,000.00.**

2) Adjacent lots with 4-storey building located at Don Domingo, Balzain, Tuguegarao City; lot area 1,383 sqm, improvements 1,065 sqm; minimum bid price at **Php 14,750,000.00.**

Terms of Payment : 25% advance deposit payable as follows :
10% deposit upon submission of bids; 15% balance on deposit payable within seven (7) days from receipt of Notice of Approval.
Terms of payment on remaining balance subject to Committee approval

Terms and Conditions :
a) Bidder should use the "Purchase Proposal Form" (available at the branch office) and accompanied with the 10% deposit of the offer Price.
b) The 10% deposit should be in Manager's or Cashier's Check and payable to 'PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK'
c) As a general rule, "no bid below the minimum bid shall be accepted"
d) If the bidder is a representative of a corporation, the representative must submit to the Bidding Committee a Secretary's Certificate or A Special Power of Attorney (SPA) to represent the said corporation.
e) PNB's decision is final and binding to the winning bidder. No withdrawal of bids shall be allowed once the winning bid has been selected and approved by PNB. Any withdrawal of bid by winning bidder shall result to forfeiture by PNB of deposit made
f) In the event the winning bidder failed to comply with the specified payment terms, the 10% deposit shall be forfeited as penalty and the sale shall be automatically cancelled.
g) PNB shall be responsible in the payment of Creditable Withholding Tax (CWT) up to the selling price only, and any excess shall be for The account of the winning bidder. All other expenses such as documentary stamp tax, transfer tax, registration fees and other fees which are related to the transfer of the title in the name of the winning bidder shall be for the exclusive account of the winning bidder.
h) PNB reserves the right to reject any or all bids at its sole discretion, waive any defect/s or informality on the bids received and accept the bid most advantageous to PNB but does not guarantee that any award shall be made.
i) PNB reserves the right to withdraw the offered property at any time before the deadline of submission of offers for any purpose.
j) PNB does not assume any obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify any bidder for any expense that may be incurred in the Bidding process

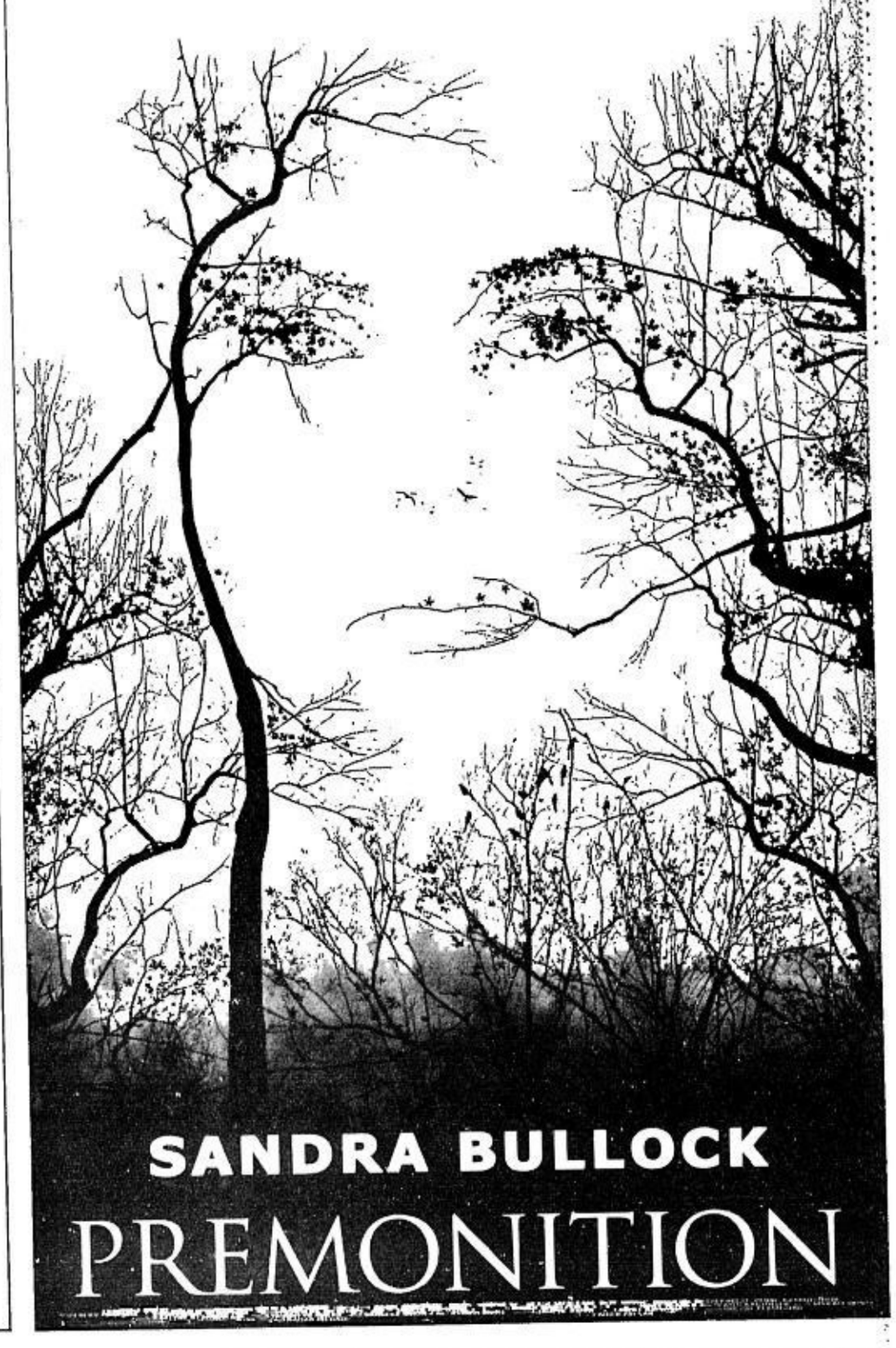
Submission Procedure : The sealed offer must be labeled **"Tuguegarao Public Sealed Bidding-Location of Property" (as so indicated above)"**

Sealed offer and check payment must be submitted not later than **3:00 p. m., March 20, 2007 (Tuesday)** to **Mr. Donato G. Orzame Jr.**, Administrative Staff Assistant, **Philippine National Bank, Tuguegarao Branch,** Bonifacio street, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

For clarification, please contact **Therese Avelino-Ong,** Assistant Vice President, Asset Management Sector at telephone number : (02) 526-3131 local 2482.

OPENS MARCH 21

HOW DO YOU SAVE SOMEONE WHO IS ALREADY DEAD?



SANDRA BULLOCK
PREMONITION

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 HAPPY HEARTS	2 300	3 SIQUIJOR: MYSTIC ISLAND	4 PATHFINDER
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BECAUSE I SAID SO	2 PATHFINDER	3 THX DREAMGIRLS GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 NOTES ON A SCANDAL	5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	6 300	7 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 300		2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX DREAMGIRLS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PATHFINDER GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BECAUSE I SAID SO GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS		2 DREAMGIRLS	
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	5 PATHFINDER	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 300	2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	4 EPIC MOVIE
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 HAPPY HEARTS		2 SIQUIJOR: MYSTIC ISLAND	
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 300	5 PATHFINDER	

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Activity Center
March 16-18, 2007
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Plumbing London's secret civilization

REVIEW

It's not an animals vs humans story that other animated feature films have tried exploring

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

THE occasionally cliché but visually inventive "Flushed Away" is the latest animated collaboration between DreamWorks and Aardman Features, which previously worked together on "Wallace and Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit."

In the movie co-directed by David Bowers and Sam Fell, two mice from opposite sides of London meet and become allies in an adventure-filled journey. Roddy St. James (voiced by Hugh Jackman), a posh pet mouse flushed down the toilet ends up in the sewers and discovers a colorful, thriving culture populated by rodents and other creatures. Rita (Kate Winslet), a boat-owning mouse, is the only one resourceful and daring enough to bring Roddy back to the surface.

Substantial, too

Except for the snails and certain tunnel-dwelling bugs, the animals in "Flushed Away" are bipedal and semi-humanoid like Mickey Mouse or Goofy. It's not an animals-versus-humans kind of story that some recent animated feature films have tried exploring. It doesn't bother too much with heavy preaching, and is more of a traditional adventure-comedy about hard-won friendships and, yes, "unexpected" heroism.

There's substance, too. Soon after the culture shock, Roddy discovers that there's much more to life than a pampered lifestyle.

Unique villain

Rita and Roddy are given an imposing adversary, the tunnel's crime lord figure Toad (Ian McKellen). The tunnel civilization is conveniently oblivious to the scheming villain's grand plan, deeply rooted in his hatred for rodents. Toad certainly is unique, with a unique hobby—collecting memorabilia from above— not your run-of-the-mill, megalomaniac.

Also in the cast of voice actors are Jean Reno, as Toad's suave French cousin Le Frog, and Andy Serkis and Bill Nighy as Toad's gullible rodent henchmen. They all do well.

Clean & bright

Jackman adds sophistication and some pushover charm to Roddy (the actor even sings), while it's nice to hear Winslet emotively conveying Rita's feistiness and tenderness through her spoken lines.

Though set mostly in a supposedly filthy location, the film shows a clean and bright habitat.

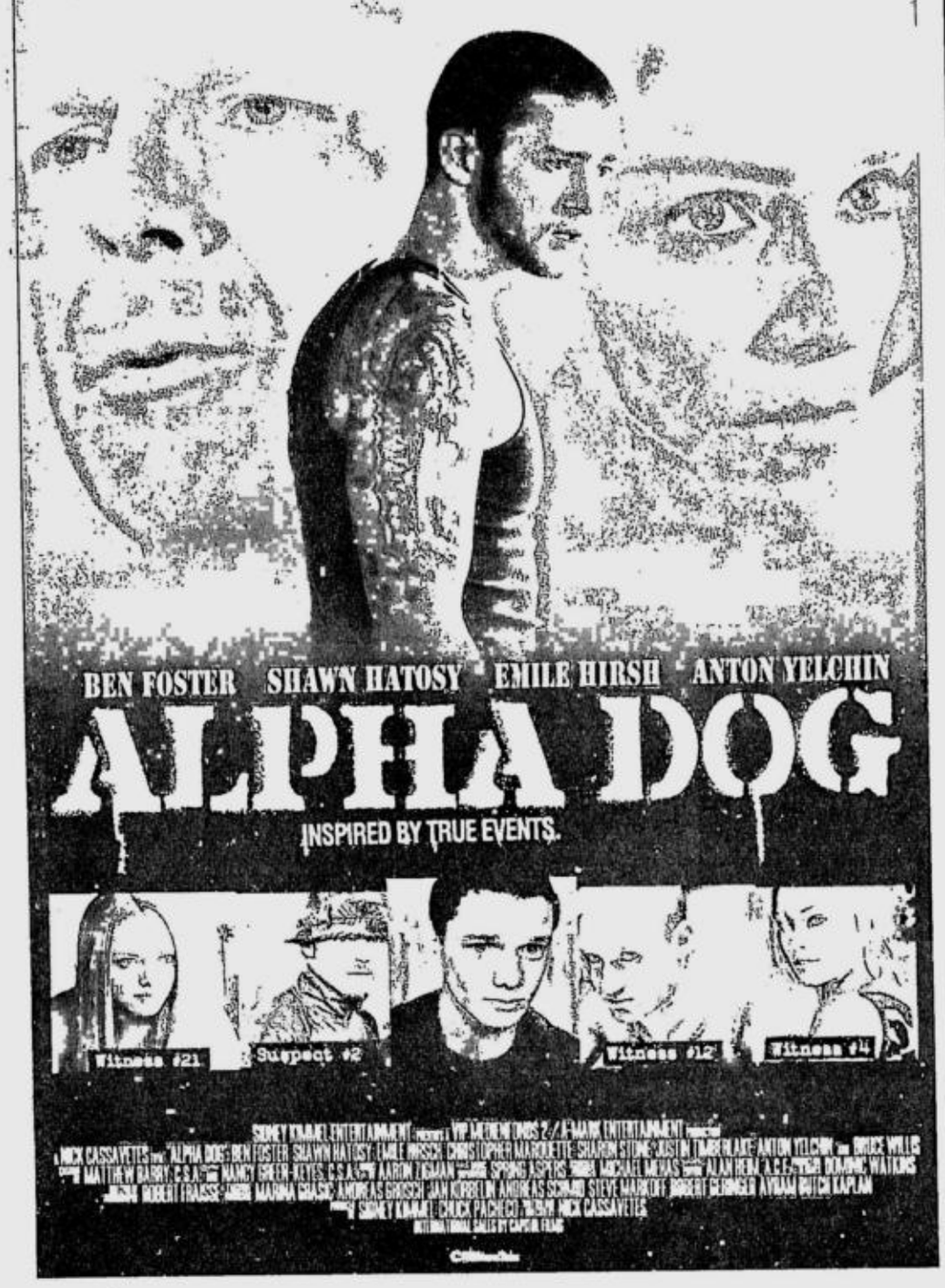
Animation-wise, it replicates the classic Aardman style—with solid looks and movements that feel like they're done in claymation. Since it is done digitally, wide cityscapes are lavishly presented, and more special effects have been incorporated, particularly in scenes that involve moving water and large, complicated action shots.

Winning figures

"Flushed Away" embraces new technology for more vividness, but it still very much feels like stop-motion animation, especially when specific figures are concerned. Character-wise, they're quite hip, so they may not appeal quickly to fans of the beloved "Wallace and Gromit." But they win you over just the same..

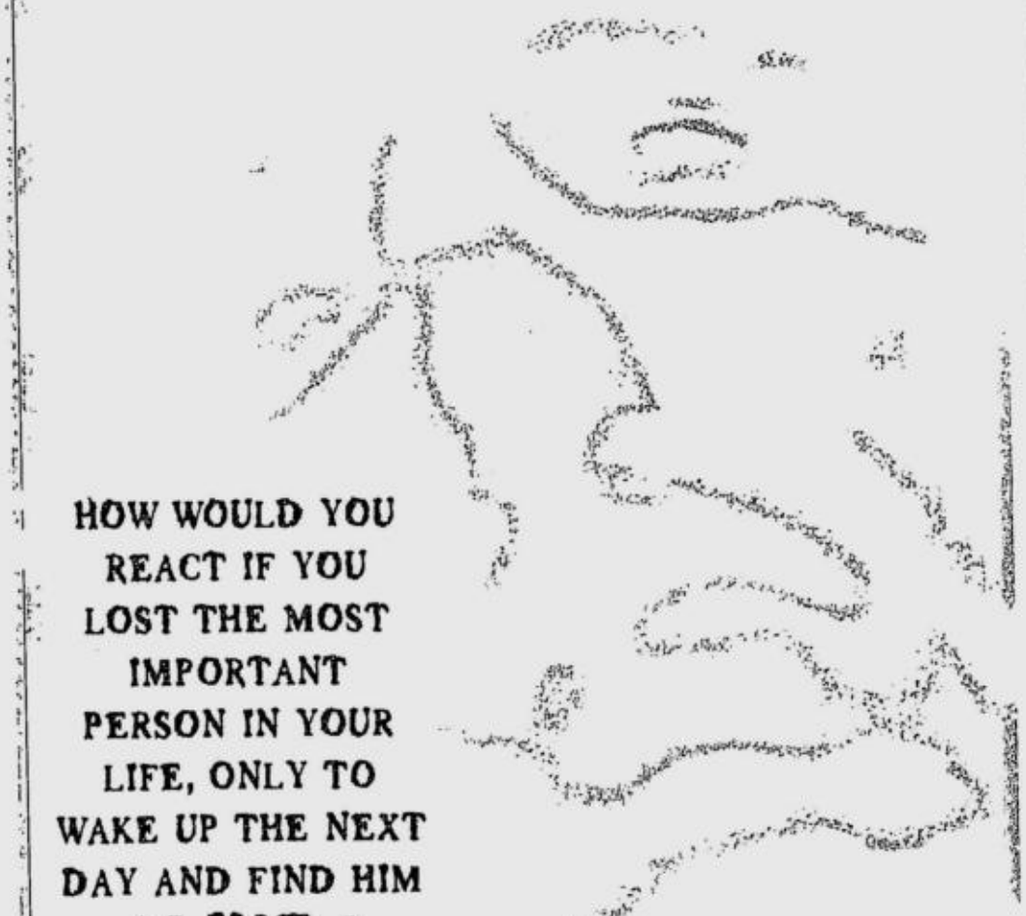
OPENS MARCH 21

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE WITH SHARON STONE AND BRUCE WILLIS



OPENS MARCH 21

SLEEPING WITH THE DEAD



SANDRA BULLOCK

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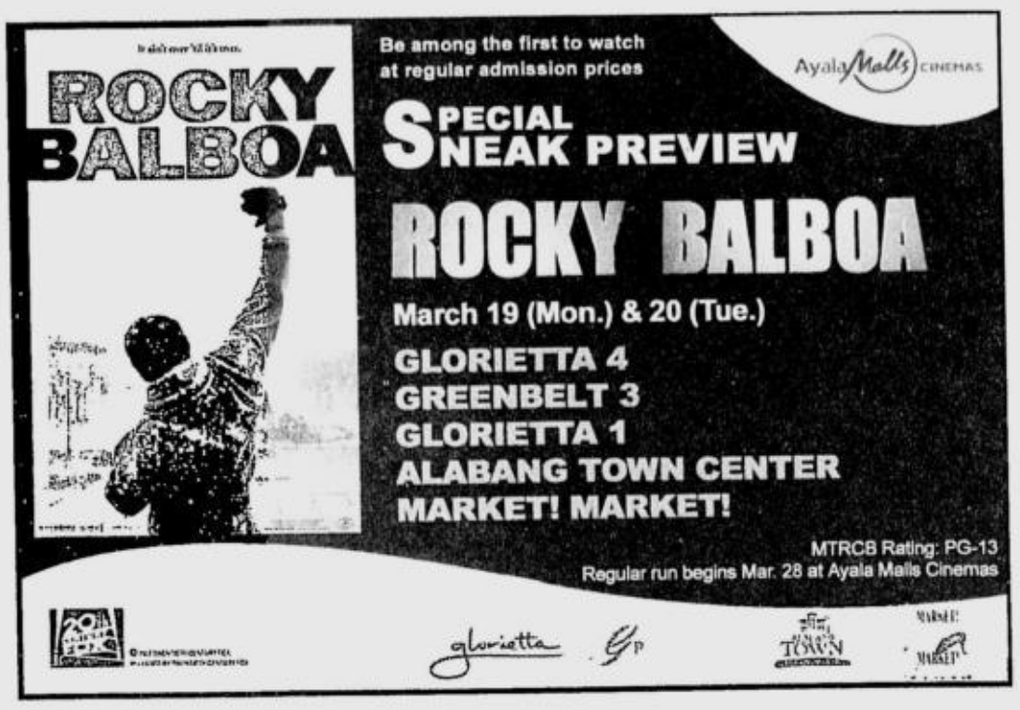

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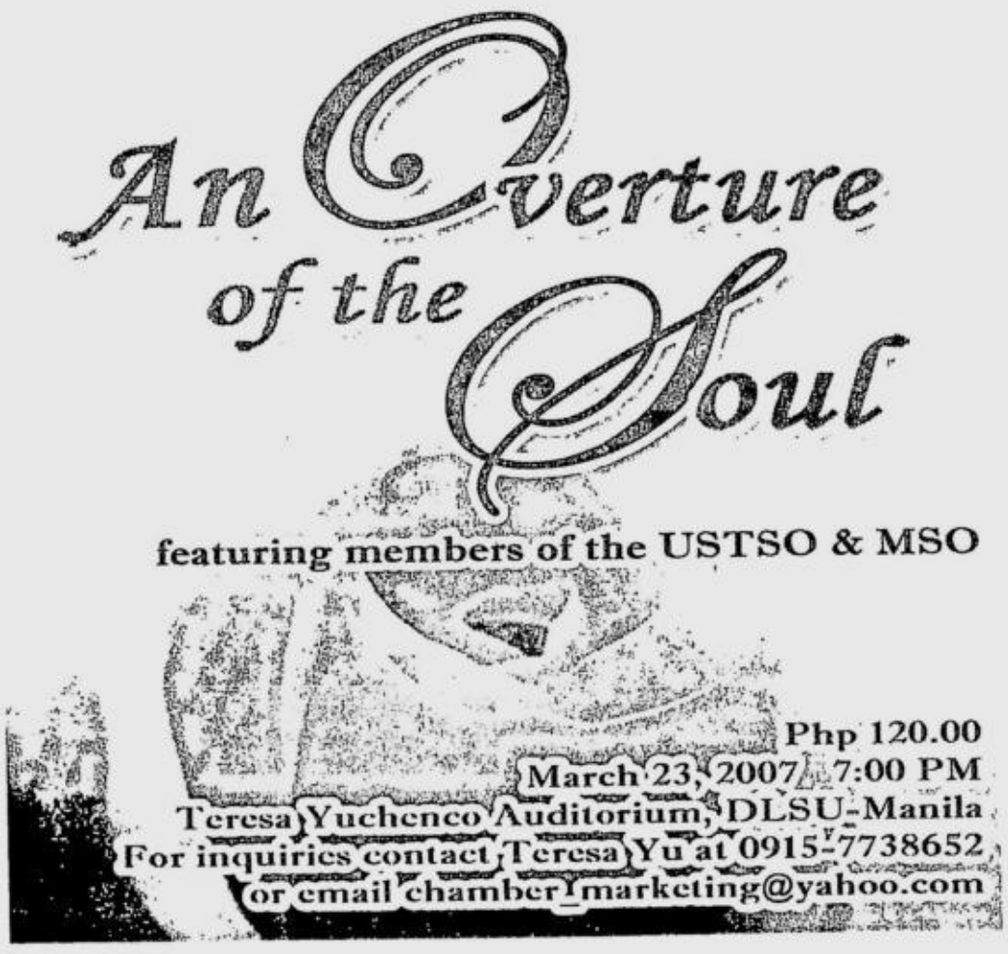

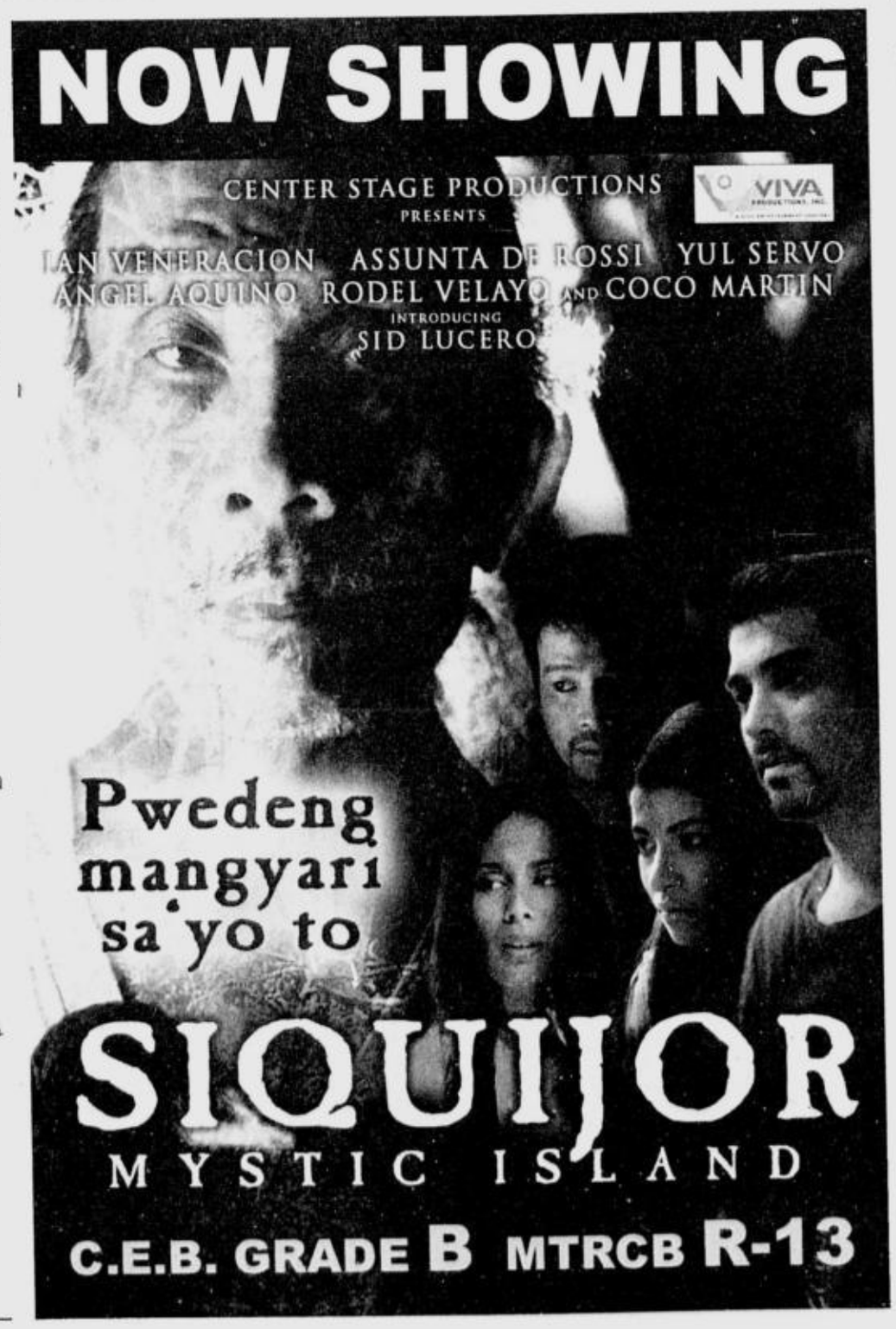

FEEDBACK

Pinoys updated

From Evelyn Vargas-Knaebel (evelyn.vargas-knaebel@hispeed.ch):

Thanks to Mr. Nepales' column, we are updated on Filipino filmmakers' films featured in festivals in the US. Indeed, independent Filipino filmmakers have long been making waves in the international scene (since the time of de Ocampo, Red and other Mowelfund-ers in the '90s) but there are only a few columnists/journalists who have featured them compared to mainstream films.

Filipino filmmakers have duly penetrated the world cinema market and film festivals not only in Hollywood but also in Switzerland, where "Batad" by Benjie Garcia will be in official competition at the 22nd Friborg International Film Festival, which opens today. Proof that there are good and interesting films Filipino.

Agree

From Catherine (wesley6508@rogers.com) 687 Willard Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada:

I agree with you wholeheartedly that one of the other actresses [in 'Dreamgirls'] should have won the Oscar. I guess the academy got so affected with [Jennifer Hudson's] singing that all else went right out the window—even some of its good sense.

Not cute

From Elle (Elle13@yahoo.com), 711 gramercy park, New York, NY 10013:

Let's say Bamboo's music is OK. But could somebody tell him that it's not a "Pinoy" thing to clown or look silly in his pics? He's not that good-looking to look cute if he does that. He's ugly!

Butler fan

From Debbie Veltry (via e-mail), Germantown, Maryland:

Great job on the Gerard Butler interview! Thanks for drawing out some of the more personal stuff in his life. He revealed more to you than I ever heard before. It's about time this very handsome, hot, hilarious actor got recognized. I think he is great—as do many of his GerardButler.net fans (and on other fan Web sites, too).

Ashamed?

From Ogie Ognaya (etivacphilimarag@yahoo.com):

Filipinos here in the US were waiting for AJ Tabaldo to mention that he was of Filipino origin in his previous interviews and introductions but he didn't. Had he done so, we Filipinos would have rallied behind him. We felt he was ashamed to mention that he had Filipino blood. Now, you know why he was booted out.

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MTRCB Rating: R-13

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SUPERMAN RETURNS 3D
2:30PM Admission Fee- P250
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2D
8:30PM Admission Fee- P200/ P250
T-REX IN 3D
11:30AM 1:00PM 5:30PM 7:00PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER
PREMIERE CINEMA
YOU GOT ME
CENTERSTAGE
300
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
BECAUSE I SAID SO
CINEMA 2
DREAMGIRLS/ 300
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 DREAMGIRLS
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 BATAD
4 GHOST RIDER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 300
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 HAPPY HEARTS
9 SIQUIJOR
10 DEAD PEOPLE 2
11 PATHFINDER
12 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 300
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 300
4 PATHFINDER
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
7 SIQUIJOR
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 GHOST RIDER
12 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 PRIMEVAL
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 GHOST RIDER
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 PATHFINDER
8 HAPPY HEARTS
9 BECAUSE I SAID SO
10 SIQUIJOR
11 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 PATHFINDER
4 YOU GOT ME
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 SIQUIJOR
9 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
10 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PATHFINDER
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 SIQUIJOR
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 300
5 SIQUIJOR
6 BATAD
7 YOU GOT ME
8 GHOST RIDER
9 DREAMGIRLS

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 300

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 EPIC MOVIE
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 SIQUIJOR
12 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 EPIC MOVIE

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 THE HITCHER
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 300
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 PATHFINDER

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PATHFINDER
4 HAPPY HEARTS
5 300
6 YOU GOT ME
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 300
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 HAPPY HEARTS
5 YOU GOT ME
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 NUMBER 23

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 NUMBER 23

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 300
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 YOU GOT ME
5 NUMBER 23
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 MUSIC ANG LYRIS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 PRIMEVAL
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 THE RETURN/ MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 PATHFINDER
2 300
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 300
2 BATAD
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 THE HITCHER
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 EPIC MOVIE

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 300
2 IT'S A GIRL BOY THING
3 YOU GOT ME
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 THE HITCHER
2 RESERVED
3 300
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A GIRL BOY THING
6 HAPPY HEARTS
7 RESERVED
8 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 300
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER
6 YOU GOT ME
7 SPIRIT TRAP
8 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVINSIBLES
4 YOU GOT ME
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2 300
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 PATHFINDER
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

4 DREAMGIRLS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

5 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

6 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

7 SIQUIJOR
1:35 3:40 5:45 7:50 10:00

8 indieSine: COMPOUND
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

9 BECAUSE I SAID SO
1:05 3:15 5:25 7:35 9:50

10 HAPPY HEARTS
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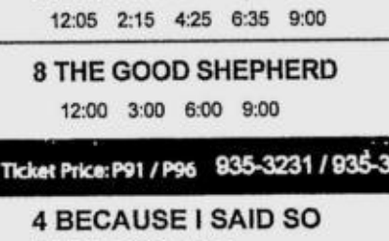

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2 SIQUIJOR
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

3 DREAMGIRLS
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

4 HAPPY HEARTS
10:20 12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00

5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
10:10 12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00

6 PATHFINDER
10:10 12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

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Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 DREAMGIRLS
12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

2 300
12:55 3:40 6:25 9:10

3 YOU GOT ME
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

4 HAPPY HEARTS
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

5 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

7 PATHFINDER
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

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2 HAPPY HEARTS
4 DREAMGIRLS
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 YOU GOT ME
6 300

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Ticket Price: P100 687-5378

1 300
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

2 PATHFINDER
1:25 3:50 6:15 8:40

3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40

4 DREAMGIRLS
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

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2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 BABEL
5 YOU GOT ME

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1 FLUSHED AWAY
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3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
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2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 PATHFINDER
4 300
5 THE HITCHER
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1 EPIC MOVIE
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 THE NUMBER 23
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1 300
2 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
3 HANNIBAL RISING
4 HAPPY HEARTS
5 FLUSHED AWAY
6 YOU GOT ME

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1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
4 ROME and JULIET
5 THE HITCHER
6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

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PAX Thien Jolie, left, shown with other kids in the orphanage. AFP

Where superstar Angelina Jolie is just an ordinary girl

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—When Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt showed up at a Vietnamese orphanage last fall, most of the staff had no idea they were Hollywood superstars.

"They looked very much like ordinary people," said Bui Thi Bich Tuyen, a nurse at the Tam Binh orphanage where Jolie adopted the newest member of her family, 3-year-old Pax Thien Jolie, on Thursday.

"We thought that they were just an ordinary couple that wanted to play with the kids and give them presents," Tuyen said. "They brought lots of toys."

Jolie shared crayons and drew pictures with the kids. "We could already see that she had a heart for children," said Tuyen, the nurse who had been in charge of raising Pax since he was brought to the orphanage as an infant.

ANGELINA Jolie leaves Tam Binh orphanage with Cambodian-born son, Maddox, 5. REUTERS

"His Vietnamese name was Truong Quang Sang, but we just called him Sang," Tuyen said. "He is a very lively boy, but sometimes when he met strangers he would become shy and often cried."

Tuyen said Pax was of average size for a Vietnamese child his age — 92 centimeters (3 feet) tall and 14.5 kilograms (32 pounds).

Big change

"He is just a little boy, so I don't think he understands the big change that has come into his life," Tuyen said. "He is very lucky to be adopted by a famous star."

About 350 children live at the Tam Binh orphanage on the outskirts of Vietnam's booming southern business hub, Ho Chi Minh City.

Pax shared a room with about 25 of them, where they slept in two rows of beds in a 30-square-meter (320 square-foot) room.

Now he is staying in a Ho Chi Minh City luxury hotel with his mother and his new brother, 5-year-old Maddox, whom Jolie adopted in neighboring Cambodia.

It was not known how long Jolie would be in Vietnam, although one of her representatives said Thursday that she would probably stay until sometime next week.

US officials must issue a visa before Pax can travel with his mother to the United States. Visas are usually issued in the capital, Hanoi, about two hours north of Ho Chi Minh City by plane.

No inkling

In addition to brother Maddox, Pax's other new siblings are 2-year-old Zahara, adopted from Ethiopia; and another sister, Shiloh, born to Jolie and Pitt in May.

Pitt did not travel to Vietnam with Jolie this week. She filed the adoption papers herself because the couple are not married.

Like Tuyen, orphanage vice director Ho Thi Kim Thoa had no idea who the superstars were when they first turned up at Tam Binh during a surprise visit last Thanksgiving.

"We did not realize that they are famous movie stars until the next day, when we saw their photos in the papers," Thoa said.

Another orphanage staffer, who identified herself only as Yen, said she was also surprised to learn she had crossed paths with Hollywood stars.

"I wish I had known," Yen said. "I would have brought a camera with me and had my picture taken."

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Or submit your resumé by email at:
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ITB NO.: 03-05-2007

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is inviting all interested bidders in its forthcoming public bidding for the project stated hereunder:

Name of Project	: Supply and Delivery of 1,366 pcs. Memento Rings for the 20 year loyalty awardees
Technical Specifications	: 18k yellow gold; minimum weight of 10 grams regardless of size, both for male and female
Approved Budget	: Nineteen Million One Hundred Seventy Four Thousand Seven Hundred Five & 92/100 Pesos (Php 19,174,705.92)
Source of Fund	: Internally Funded

Only suppliers duly registered with PAGCOR shall be allowed to participate in the bidding. Unregistered suppliers must register at the Suppliers Registration & Evaluation Section (SRES), Procurement & Property Department (PPD), 2nd Floor PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila., Tel. No. 526-0573.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 16, 2007 – April 4, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	March 27, 2007 (2 pm)
3. Submission of Bids	April 10, 2007 (2 pm)
4. Opening of Bids	April 10, 2007 (2 pm onwards)

Bid documents will be available to prospective bidders at the BAC Secretariat Office, 2nd Flr. PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila upon payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of ***Nine Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Seven & 35/100 Pesos (Php 9,587.35)***. In order to secure the documents, bidders should present the Official Receipt issued by our Cashier to the BAC Secretariat.

PAGCOR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

PAGCOR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Please address all communications to the BAC Secretariat Unit, Procurement & Property Department.

(Sgd) RAFAEL A. FRANCISCO
Chairperson, BAC 3

(PDI – Mar. 18, 2007))

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of National Capital Region, Department of Labor and Employment, to be affixed at the City of Manila, Philippines, this 10th day of January 2007.

(Sgd.) LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(Renewal of this license is thirty (30) days before expiration date)

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MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER — *Contract Reference Number / Name of the Contract / Location of the Contract*

Standard Form Number: SF-INFR-05
Revised On: July 29, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	:	A) Construction of Conference Room and Four (4) Offices at the Canopy of the Main Building. B) Procurement of Various Medical Equipment
Location	:	MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER
Bried Description	:	A) Construction of Conference Room and Four (4) Offices at the Canopy at the main Building would include General requirements and Architectural works. Which include mansonry works, structural steel columns, roof trusses, roofing, wall (exterior, interior, steel columns), finishing/tiling works, parapet board, ceiling board (exterior, a. interior, b. interior), doors and windows, cabinets, paintings, plumbing works, electrical works demolition works and other miscellaneous works. B) Purchase of Medical Equipment which include delivery and installation of various Medical Equipment.
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	:	A) Php 3,033,950.53 - INFRA (DBP-Medicare Trust Fund) B) Php 9,613,262.58 - GOODS (DBP-Medicare Trust Fund) Php 2,084,093.41 GOODS (MMMH Income)
Contract Duration	:	90 days - INFRA
Contract Duration	:	90 days - GOODS

Prospective Bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/ fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

A. Civil Works

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Reciept from prospective bidders of Letter of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	April 2-11, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	April 12-17, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	April 18-24, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	April 30, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 2 - 14, 2007
6. Pre-bid Conference	May 11, 2007 - 2:00 P.M.
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	May 25, 2007

B. Procurement of Goods

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 30, 2007 - April 19, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	April 11, 2007 - 2:00 P.M.
3. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility *(If single-stage bidding is used, delete this activity)*	March 30, 2007 - April 19, 2007
4. Opening of Bids	April 23, 2007 - 2:00 P.M.
5. Bid Evaluation	April 24, 2007 - May 8, 2007
6. Post-qualification	May 10, 2007
7. Notice of Award	May 25, 2007

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at **Brgy. # 6 San Julian, Batac, Ilocos Norte**, upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 2,000.00** to the **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center - Cashier**. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 5,000.00 - INFRA : PHP 3,000.00 - GOODS** to the **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center - Cashier.**

The **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center** assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **LOUIE A. GUERRERO, M.D., FPCR**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Mar. 18 & 23, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY
Pangi, Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay Province
Telefax: 062-3335492

DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **Department of Education, Division of Zamboanga Sibugay**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/ distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	:	**Supply & Delivery of CY2006 School Furniture**
Location	:	**Division of Zamboanga Sibugay**
Brief Description	:	**Elementary Tables and Chairs with teachers' tables & chairs Secondary Armchairs with teachers' tables and chairs**
Approved Budget for the Contract	:	**Php 10,126,000.00**
Contract Duration	:	**120 calendar days from the date of Notice to Proceed to the Date of Acceptance**

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

Activity	Date	Venue
1. Issuance of Eligibility & Bid Documents	March 5-12, 2007	Division Office
2. Pre-bid Conference	March 19, 2007 10:00 AM	Division Office Conference Room
3. Deadline of Submission of Bids	April 2, 2007 10:00 AM	Division Office Conference Room
4. Opening of Bids	April 2, 2007 10:00 AM	Division Office Conference Room

Bid Documents will be available only to **prospective bidders** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php3,000.00** to the **DepEd Zamboanga Sibugay Division Cashier**.

The **DepEd Zamboanga Sibugay Division**, reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or bidders.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **GLORIA P. ZAMORA**
BAC-Chairman

(PDI - March 18, 2007)

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416-8144/416-8145/373-3901 loc. 8302/8303/8220

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC) SECRETARIAT OFFICE
Tel. No. (632) 455-2758 Email: vsvillarama@nfa.gov.ph

RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of one (1) unit Security Appliance/Firewall

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY*, through a UK Grant intends to apply the sum of *P400,000.00* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *the supply and delivery of one (1) unit security appliance/firewall.* Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *the supply and delivery of one (1) unit security appliance/firewall.* The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **Instruction to Bidders (ITB)**.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the NFA-BAC SECRETARIAT and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of P2,500.00. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative. Prospective bidders who secured the bidding documents for the failed bidding of March 6, 2007 are no longer required to pay anew the non-refundable fee of P2,500.00 for the bid documents.

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY* will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *April 3, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.*** at the *NFA Boardroom, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City.*

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the *NFA Boardroom, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City* on April 17, 2007 from 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.. Late Bids shall not be accepted. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in either of the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Required Amount In Percent of ABC
Cash, cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One Percent (1%)
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
Surety Bond stamped "Callable on Demand" on the face of the Bond issued by GSIS	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Any combination of the above	Proportionate to share

Bid opening shall be on *April 17, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.* at the *NFA Boardroom, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procuring Entity - NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Contact Person - Jose D. Chua / Violeta S. Villarama
Address - Philsugin Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Telephone/Fax No. - (632) 455-2758
Mobile Phone - (0908) 4102732
e-mail address - vsvillarama@nfa.gov.ph
Website - www.nfa.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.**
Deputy Administrator and BAC Chair for Administration and General Support Services

(PDI - March 18 & 25, 2007)

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

- ➢ Must possess at least a Bachelor's Degree in Business Studies/ Advertising/Management, Sales and Marketing or equivalent
- ➢ Highly motivated, a team player, with good communication skills, thrives under pressure and can work under minimal supervision
- ➢ Preferably has at least 1 year experience in Corporate Sales/ Advertising/Publication

Interested applicants should send their application letter and comprehensive resume to:

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B.S.C. Management Entrepreneurship
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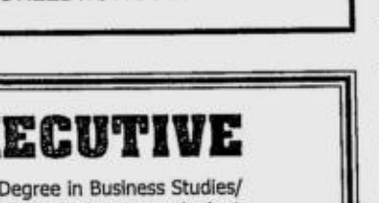
Love: Dan, Martin & Dad

NSO Admin receives alumnus award

NSO ADMINISTRATOR CARMELITA N. Ericta has been selected as this year's **Outstanding Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Alumnus in the Field of Public Administration** by the Philippine-Japan Fellows Association, Inc. (PHILJAFA). The awarding ceremony was held recently at the Century Park Sheraton coinciding with the 40th anniversary celebration of PHILJAFA.



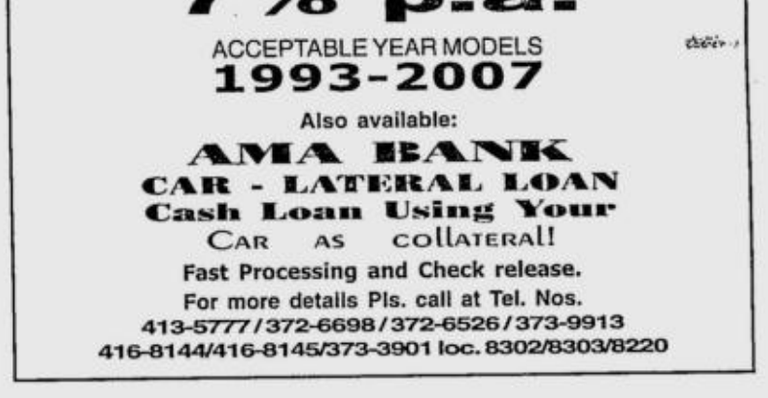
Carmelita N. Ericta

The PHILJAFA award is bestowed every five years to former participants of JICA-sponsored training programs conducted in Japan. Contribution to nation building was the prime consideration in the evaluation of this year's nominees.

Out of several nominees from various government agencies, only seven were selected as awardees in various fields, namely: Public Administration, Research, Technology, Science, Medicine, Research Administration, and Human Resource Development.

Administrator Ericta joins the list of past PHILJAFA awardees in the field of public administration from the NSO, namely, former Administrator Tomas P. Africa, former Deputy Administrator Nelia R. Marquez, and current Regional Director Dr. Salvador A. Aves of Region X.

This year's Board of Judges was composed of Commissioner Nona Ricafort of the Commission on Higher Education, Director Mary Ann Fernandez-Mendoza of the Career Executive Service Board, Director Luningning Samarita of the National Academy of Science and Technology, Deputy Director General August Santos of the National Economic and Development Authority, and PHILJAFA President Ernesto P. Martinez.



PNP SERVICE DESK PERSONNEL TRAINING

The advocacy of the Philippine National Police to professionalize and personalize the services of all PNP Service Desk Personnel from the National Capital Region Participants was initiated through the office of the PNP NHQ DHRDD by Executive Director PSSupt. Orlando M. Hizon. The training was held on February 20-23, 2007 at Maritime Building, Camp Crame, Quezon City. Photo shows on the opening ceremony (standing from left) PSupt Mario F. Llorin, the Asst. Chief, Unit Training Program Division, DHRDD, standing behind is PSI Tessie B. Sarmiento of DHRDD; and (seated from left) are the PNP PCInspector Ebra M. Moxir, the Police Chaplain, PSSupt Benjamin A. Belarmino, Jr., the Deputy Director-DHRDD, and Mr. Rafael S. Chico, the Guest Lecturer who is a "Service Excellence Guru" in hospitality and tourism industry.

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PCCI
DEADLINE OF FILING OF CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY & NOMINATION FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL BE ON MARCH 30, 2007 AT PCCI OFFICE 5:00 P.M.

MISCELLANEOUS

MAPS 2007 EDITION
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ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ROSITA Y. ASONG consisting of real property was extrajudicially settled and distributed among her heirs ABRAHAM B. ASONG and CYNTHIA Y. ASONG by means of public document executed on Feb. 26, 2007, and ratified before Atty. JOSE CARLOS TANINGCO, Notary Public in and for Makati City, as per Doc. No. 372, Page No. 76, Book III, series of 2007, of his Notarial Register. (Mar. 4,11&18, 2007)

The estate of ANGELINA P. ALEJO has been extrajudicially settled among her heirs, Ofelia S. Alejo, Rolando, Lariza, Liza, Rico, Maria & Lea all surnamed ALEJO and reputation/donation of the whole estate has been made in favor of Rolando P. Alejo before the Notary Public Atty. Danilo Balanura on Feb. 4, 2007, DOC.#26, PAGE#6, BOOK 21, Series of 2007 (Mar. 18, 25 & Apr. 1, 2007)

AUCTION SALE

Marilao-Filipinas Pawnshop, M & R Bldg., Tabing-Ilog Marilao, Bulacan. All Unredeemed Pledges of SEPT 2006 willl be Auctioned on MAR. 24 8:00am.Lanuza & Sons Auctioneer.
(PDI- MARCH. 13, 2007)

Meycauayan-Filipinas Pawnshop,Allw Complex, Calvario,Meyc.Bulacan. All Unredeemed Pledges of SEPT 2006 willl be Auctioned on MAR. 24, 10:00am. Lanuza & Sons Autioneer. (PDI- MARC.18, 2007)

LEGAL NOTICE

Affidavit of Loss exec by Dr. RAMON P. PATERNO on 03/07/07 for PCA Cert. #1247 of 05/17/79 before Notary Public Francisco P. Taala of QC as Doc 163 Page 34 Book 165 Series of 2007.
(PDI-Mar. 11, 18 & 25, 2007)

Notice is given that the estate of the late LUALHATI A. COJUANGCO has been judicially settled among her heirs before Notary Public Ason Benedict C. Velasco of Makati City as per Doc. No. 62, Page No. 14, Book No. 1 Series of 2006. The Deed of Partition was approved in an Order dated December 8, 2006 by the Regional Trial Court, Pasay City. Branch 108 in SP Proceeding 04-00664-CFM. (Mar. 18,25 Apr. 1, 2007)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF LATE LOLITA D. JAYPE HAS BEEN EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED BY HER HEIRS AS PER DOC#058;PAGE#13;BOOK#28; SERIES OF 2007 BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC ATTY. DANILO BAÑARES OF MAKATI CITY. (MAR. 4,11&18, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late MIGUEL P. MONTENEGRO & ROSARIO GOMEZ have been extrajudicially settled by their heirs as per Doc#015 Page#02 Book#24 Series of 2002 before Notary Public Ruben Songco of Masbate.
(PDI-March 18 & 25 April 1, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of NOBERTO B BLANCO was extrajudicially settled by his heirs per Doc No. 23; Page No. 4 Book No. III Series of 2007 Before Notary Public Dulcisimo Hinanay Jr.
PDI-Mar. 11, 18 & 25, 2007

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CONSTANCIO T. MAGNO has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 472, Page No. 95, Book No. 102, Series of 2006 before Notary Public Atty. Jose L. Sta. Ana of Marikina City.
(PDI-March 4. 11 & 18. 2007)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late AURORA DIZON CAÑIZARES & FERNANDO L. CAÑIZARES were extrajudicially settled among their heirs before notary public Atty. Candice B. Manalo as per Doc#454 Page#91 Book#03 Series of 2007.
(PDI-Mar. 4,11 & 16, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the Estate of the late Catalino D. Abrigo has been extra-judicially settled among his heirs as per Doc No 69,Page No 15,Book No CCLXI,Series of 2006 before Notary Public Atty Ricardo A. Fabros Jr of San Pablo City
(PDI-Mar 18,25, and April 01,2007)

NOTICE OF LOSS

APM Cert. Nos. 23438, 15439, 15501, 17744, Cert. Nos. 139099, 78986, 79461, PET Cert. No. 2794 issued to MDR SEC. INC. has been lost. If no contest is received, new certificates will be issued.
(PDI-March 4, 11 & 18, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that IONICS, INC. Stock Cert.#43825 with 10,000 shares issued to OSCAR U. ONG was lost. If no contest is received, new certificate will be issued.
(PDI - March 18, & 25 2007)

Notice is hereby given that Loyola Plans Consolidated Inc. O.R. Nos. 11121000032981-90; 32991-3000; 33001-010; 32841-50; 32924-20; 40425-430 was declared lost & invalid by EDNA G. DE PEDRO. If found, pls. Call 636-0109/5279531
(PDI-Mar. 11, 18 & 25, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that BPI Stock Cert. No. 177404 & 201354, issued to ALINA'S PHILIPPINE HANDICRAFTS was declared lost. If no contest received, new certificate will be issued.
(PDI Mar. 18,25 & Apr. 1, 2007)

PERSONAL

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Notice to the Public
A warrant of arrest has been issued by RTC Branch 273 City of Marikina Criminal Case No. 2004-6516MK. Against: **FLORENDA T. LIBID**, wife of **MARLON LIBID**, last known address at Manamba Bankers Village, Bonuan, Dagupan City. Information about her maybe reported at telephone no. (02)645-2670, Mobile No. (0919)267-4920.
Reward awaits information given leading to her arrest.
(PDI – Mar. 18. 2007)

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Republic of the Philippines
MUNICIPALITY OF VICTORIA
Province of Northern Samar
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: March 18, 2007
ADB Loan No.: 1772-PHI
Contract No.: SP-08-009-02

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RURAL PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT SECTOR (InfRES) PROJECT and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for **Rehabilitation/ Improvement of 7.42 kilometers Victoria Farm to Market Road, Package 2.** Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries of the Asian Development Bank that:
   (a) are registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board to undertake infrastructure projects as Small B contractor or better, and
   (b) have undertaken within the past 5 years, as the contractor, management contractor or subcontractor, (3) roads construction work projects valued at least Nine Million Pesos (P9,000,000.00) each.
2. The *LGU-Victoria* invites sealed bids from bidders with the above qualifications for the construction and completion of the Works for the Rehabilitation/Improvement of 7.42 kilometers Victoria Farm to Market Road Package 2, which includes Earthworks (Excavation and embankment); Road Gravelling; and Construction/Installation of RCBC and RCPC. The Contract Period is about eight (8) months (240 calendar days).
3. Bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect and acquire the bidding documents, at BAC Secretariat LGU-Victoria, Victoria Northern Samar.
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders on submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **EIGHT THOUSAND PESOS (P8,000.00).**
5. All Bids must be accompanied by a Security of 2% of the total bid price in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency, and must be delivered to LGU-VICTORIA, VICTORIA , N. SAMAR. The schedule of bid activities are as follows:

Activity	Date	Time	Venue
Issuance of Bid Documents	March 12 to April 16, 2007	8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M	BAC Secretariat, LGU-Victoria, N. Samar
Bid Preparation Period	March 19 to April 16, 2007		
Pre-Bid Conference	April 3, 2007	9:00 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar
Deadline for Submission of Bids	April 17, 2007	9:59 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar
Bid Opening	April 17, 2007	10:00 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar

6. The LGU reserves the right to accept or reject any bids and to cancel the bidding process at any time prior to award of the contractor, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligations to inform the affected bidders of the reasons for Employer's action
7. For further inquiries you can call cell no. 09065840767

(Sgd.) **MARTHA E. CADANO**
Chairperson,
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – Mar. 18, 2007)

RIVIERA GOLF CLUB, INC.
BY-PASS ROAD, SILANG, CAVITE
NOTICE OF SALE OF DELINQUENT RGCI SHARES AT AUCTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE RIVIERA GOLF CLUB, INC. (RGCI) WILL SELL THE FOLLOWING DELINQUENT SHARES AT A PUBLIC AUCTION PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE BY-LAWS, FOR NON-PAYMENT OF THE MONTHLY DUES AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS:

A-0609	A-1074	A-0821	A-0143	A-1668	A-1452	A-1417	A-1668
A-0911	A-1259	A-0763	A-1695	A-0214	A-1486	A-1646	A-1441
A-1502	A-1321	A-0379	A-1325	A-0179	A-1456	A-0069	A-1701
A-1623	A-0409	A-0236	A-0660	A-1514	A-1286	A-1582	A-0826
A-0829	A-1402	A-1462	A-0596	A-1703	A-0224	A-1026	A-1650
A-0499	A-0365	A-1079	A-0038	A-0197	A-0759	A-1678	A-0535
A-1750	A-0565	A-1363	A-1680	A-0464	A-1061	A-1489	A-0786
A-1561	A-1620	A-0627	A-0539	A-1472	A-1228	A-1686	A-1224
A-1830	A-1758	A-1812	A-0431	A-1474	A-1442	A-0665	A-0697
A-1596	A-0519	A-0531	A-1275	A-1081	A-0176	A-0141	A-1140
A-0698	A-0335	A-1226	B-0222	B-0068	B-0415	B-0161	B-0264
B-0433	B-0185	B-0420	B-0315	B-0123	B-0016	C-0248	C-0285
C-0248	C-0285	C-0204	C-0198	C-0312	C-0284	C-0298	C-0095
C-0216	C-0310	C-0254	C-0210				

THE AUCTION DATE IS SET ON MARCH 23, 2007 AT 10:00 0'CLOCK A.M., AT THE TEE PAVILION, RIVIERA GOLF CLUB, INC., SILANG, CAVITE. ALL INTERESTED PARTIES MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE BIDDING.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

(Sgd.) ATTY ROLANDO G. BORJA
CORPORATE SECRETARY

(PDI – MARCH 18, 2007)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Be it known that a Warrant of Arrest against
ARNOLD JOSEPH P. MARTINEZ
whose picture appears above with last known address at No. 109 Perea Street, Maripola Bldg., Legaspi Village, Makati City, was issued by the Regional Trial Court of Makati City, Branch 145, in connection with the case entitled "*People of the Philippines vs. Arnold Joseph P. Martinez*", docketed as Criminal Case No. 07-443, for the crime of **ESTAFA.**

Please direct any information to:

TWEAK AUDIO VIDEO STUDIO, INC.
Telephone No. 887-5343 or 885-7604

All information shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

(PDI – Mar. 18, 2007)

Region 12, ARMM celebrate 4-day cultural festival

Region 12 and ARMM's pride during the WOW Philippines Best of the Region in Intramuros is the latest showcase in Cotabato City's 4-day cultural festival featuring the indigenous arts and crafts, cultural extravaganzas, indigenous sports and cuisine of Central Mindanao and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Dubbed as "Kuyog", meaning "all together", the event, which ran for three years in the walled City of Manila, is now made bigger and grander as the Department of Tourism brings this festive event back to the region.

To be held in Cotabato City from March 31 to April 3, the activity is expected to attract domestic travelers from within and around the region. South Central Mindanao's domestic visitor arrivals for 2006 reached over 600,000 while arrival figures for overseas Filipinos hit a 20.59-percent increase as compared to the previous year.

A pet project of DOT Regional Director for South Central Mindanao Sohuro T. Dimaampao, the festival is a continuing program of the WOW Philippines' Best of the Regions, originally staged in Intramuros, Manila.

"It is with great pride that we present our first ever grand celebration of culture through this 4-Day festival that highlights the best of what Region 12 and ARMM have to offer" said Dimaampao, "This has been a long-time dream. Started by the Secretary now Senator Richard J. Gordon in WOW Philippines Intramuros, Manila, I am very grateful that Secretary Joseph "Ace" H. Durano has been equally supportive of this project, especially now that its finally back in the region" she added.

"Kuyog" kicks off on March 31 at the South Seas Mall in Cotabato City with tourism secretary Durano, Cotabato City Mayor Datu Muslimin G. Sema and ARMM Regional Governor Datu Zaldy "Puti" Uy Ampatuan opening the event with the ceremonial beating of the gong. Other guests who will grace the various events are officials from DOT, local and national officials from government line agencies and local chief executives of Region 12 and ARMM.

Cash prizes await lucky winners who will compete in any of the six various competitions, namely: the Regional Food Festival (culinary competition); "Pakaradian": a tableau cultural showdown; "Kandedelemat nu Maginged": Indigenous Sports Competition; Best Booth Competition in the Tourism Fair Exhibit; Kuyog Street Dancing competition; and "Habi": A fashion competition featuring the indigenous weaves of Region 12 and ARMM. Nobody will go home empty-handed. As much as P100,000 in cash is at stake and all participants to the different competitions are sure to go home with consolation prizes.

OBITUARIES

We remember our loved one to have lived his Life according to these lines:

"I expect to pass this world but once
Any good thing therefore that I can do,
or any kindness I can show to my fellowmen
Let me do it now
Let me not defer or neglect it
For I shall not pass this way again"

In Loving Memory

On the 24th Death Anniversary of

CONRADO C. ALCANTARA

who passed away on March 19, 1983

The Holy Mass will be offered for the eternal repose of his soul at the following:

Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque 4:00pm
St. Andrew's Cathedral, Parañaque City ..... 6:15 am
Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Baclaran, Pasay City 6:45am
Santuario de San Antonio Parish, Makati 6:00pm
St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori, Magallanes, Makati 6:00pm
San Roque Parish Church, Cabrera St., Pasay City 6:00pm
San Juan Nepomuceno Parish, Pasay City 6:00pm
Sta. Clara Parish, P. Burgos, Pasay City 6:00pm
Carmelite Monastery Church, Lanang, Davao City 6:00am
San Isidro Labrador Chapel, ... 9:00am
Sto. Nino, Talaingod, Davao del Norte
Sta. Ana Church, Sta. Ana Avenue, Davao City 12:00nn
San Pablo Parish, Matina, Davao City 12:00nn
Our Lady of the Assumption Chapel,
Alsons Compound, Lanang, Davao City 3:15pm
St. Jude Parish, Malvar Street, Davao City 5:30pm
San Pedro Cathedral, San Pedro Street, Davao City 5:30pm
Redemptorist Church, J. P. Laurel Ave., Davao City 5:30pm
Assumption Church, F. Torres Street, Davao City 5:45pm
Immaculate Conception Chapel,
Maribulan Alabel, Sarangani Province 4:00pm
Inahan sa Kinabuhi Parish, Iligan City ..... 7:00 am
San Roque Parish Church, Kiwalan, Iligan City ..... 7:00 am
Our Lady of Peace, Lugait, Misamis Oriental ..... 7:00 am

†

The Most Rev. Ramón C. Argüelles, D.D., Archbishop of Lipa,
The Most Rev. Salvador Q. Quizon, D.D., Former Aux. Bishop of Lipa,
The Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful of the Archdiocese of Lipa

Together with the Cabuhat-Acero Family

announce with joy and hope the triumphant crossing over from us to the everlasting love of the Father of our dear

Rev. Msgr. ISABELO CABUHAT ACERO, HP

on 16 March 2007, at the age of 76.

Ordained Priest: 30 November 1956
Promoted to the Dignity of Domestic Prelate: February 1982

Msgr. Acero, while serving for some years his home province Laguna, before the creation of the Diocese of San Pablo, spent for the Archdiocese of Lipa most of his priestly years.

His mortal remains lie in state at the Resurrection Chapel of San Sebastian Cathedral, Lipa City. The Archdiocesan Farewell Requiem Mass will be held at the Cathedral on Monday, 19 March 2007 at 2:00 p.m., after which follows transfer to his birthplace.

The wake continues at their family residence, J. Bondoc St., Calauan, Laguna, until Wednesday, 21 March 2007, when the 10:00 a.m. Funeral Mass will be offered at the San Isidro Labrador Parish Church before Interment.

Please omit flowers. Donations to the St. Joseph Seniorate, Home for the Aged and Sick Priests of the Archdiocese of Lipa, will be deeply appreciated.

Our Dearly Beloved

Atty. Molovon A. Azores, Sr.

February 20, 1927 - March 17, 2007

peacefully joined our Lord on March 17, 2007 at the age of 80.

His loving and caring wife **Lourdes**, children **Rowena, Reuel, Romelda, Rhodetta, Roderick, Molovon Jr., Rhodora, Ronahlee**; in-laws **Eric, Leonita, Jane, Isidoro Jr., Lanie, Philip, Veny**; grandchildren **Faith Marie, Aimma, Cher, Paul, RJ, Raizel, Rhozlyn, Marti, Jhoio, Gino, Macky, Joy**. All relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on March 22, 2007 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after 2:00 p.m. Mass.

FELICIDAD BAUTISTA PINGA

passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 17, 2007 at the age of 84.

Her brother, **Bonifacio** and sister, **Cresencia** request and pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Arlington East, The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo cor. Mercedes Avenues, San Miguel, Pasig City.

Interment will be at Evergreen Memorial Garden, Pasig City on March 20, 2007.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

DR. TOMASITO M. VALEROSO

Died in the Grace of our Lord on March 11, 2007 in San Jose, California, USA

His bereaved wife **Avelina**; children **Louela & Joey, Shiela & Peddie, Liza & Al, Pamela & Gerry, Vincent & Joan**, grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Interment will be on March 26, 2007 in San Jose, California, USA.

"Ding"
FERNANDO PUNZALAN

June 4, 1928 to March 16, 2007

His loving children: **Clifford, Wilfred, Christine & Stephen**, and their family request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in La Funeraria Paz (Araneta Ave.) until interment on Tuesday, March 20 at Eternal Gardens Memorial Park.

ARTHUR U. LANARIA

Died in the grace of our Lord on March 15, 2007 at the age of 71.

His remains lie in state at the Chapel – 14, La Funeraria Paz, Inc., 143 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Tuesday, March 20, 2007 at Paz Crematory.

Interment of ashes follows right after the cremation at St. Peter's Parish, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:39

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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MME Corporate Centre - 108 Tordesillas St.,,corner Gallardo St., Salcedo Villlage, Makati City, **812-7108 loc 1120, 0922-5587971** and look for **Philip** (For Metro Manila and Luzon applicants)

MME Cebu – Unit 2-1 Sail Centre Commercial Complex, JL Briones St., NRA Cebu City, (near SM Cebu) look for **Ronnie, 032-2333064/0910-3308723.** (For Visayas applicants)

MME Davao – 16–D Burgos St., Obrero, Davao City, look for **Edwin, 0926-9141969** (For Mindanao applicants)

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   - very keen on details
   - must be familiar in production
   - good communication skill is a must
   - graduate of any communication or advertising course

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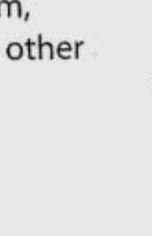

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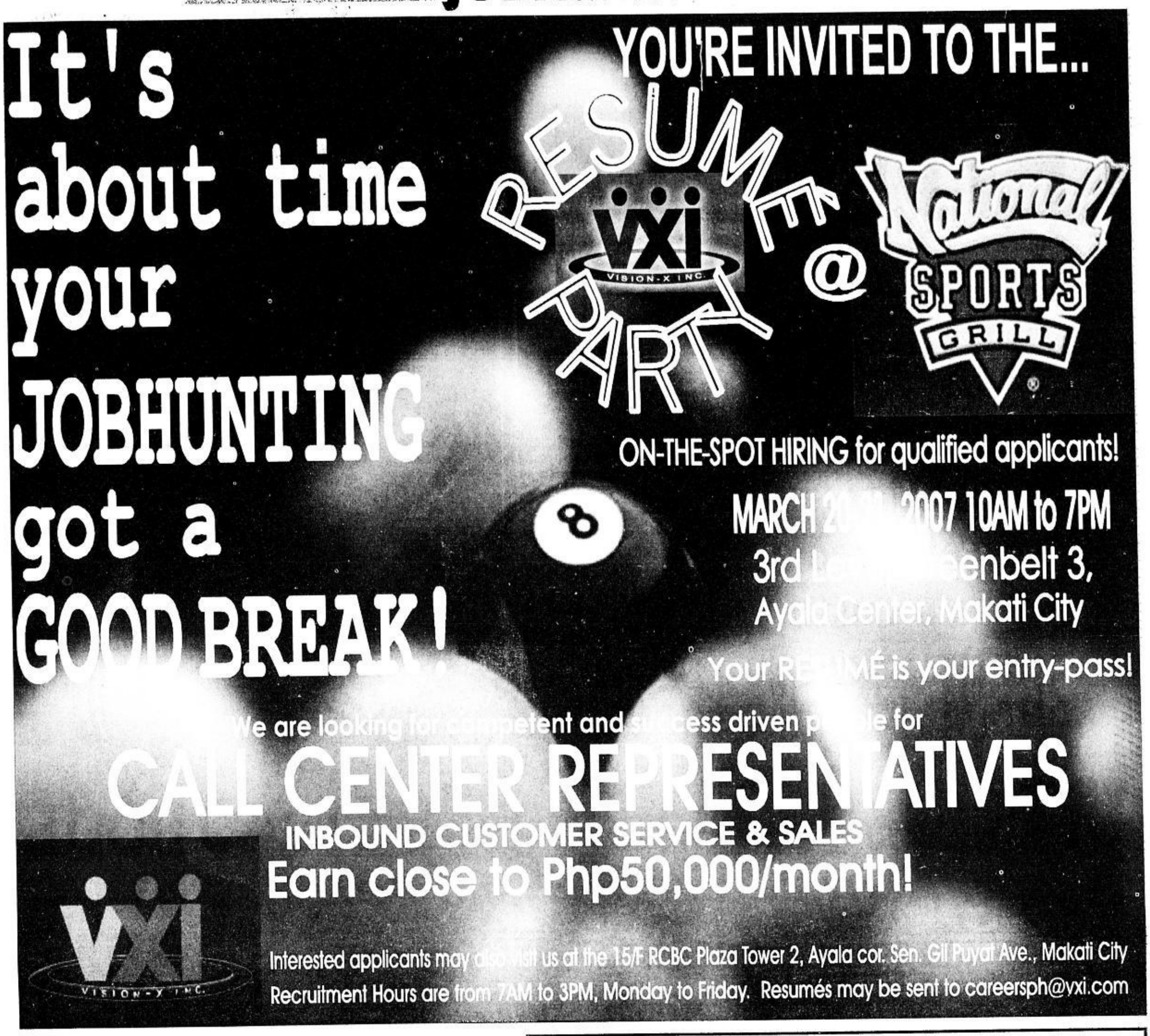

Republic Cement Group of Companies, in which French cement company Lafarge Cement is a strategic investor, is currently looking for:

CADET ENGINEERS (Ref. No. HO-CD-0207)

Requirements:

- Must be a graduate of Chemical or Mines Engineering
- Must either be a fresh graduate or with 1-2 years work experience
- Must be in the top 10% of his/her graduating class or have a professional license
- Must possess leadership qualities
- Must be driven and willing to gain hands-on experience
- Preferably living near Rizal, Bulacan, or Batangas, or be willing to live in those areas

Applicants may apply electronically, quoting the **Ref. No.** and **Job Title** on the subject line. Please attach either your certificate of graduation (for fresh graduates) or transcript of records, and your resumes and email it to Macecilia.Sese@ph.lafarge.com **no later than March 25, 2007.** You may also send it through mail to **Lafarge Cement Services (Phils.), Inc., 18th Floor PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave. cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City 1226.** Please quote the Ref. No. and job title on the envelope.

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C. MANDARIN TEACHERS
D. FEMALE ACCOUNTANTS
E. FEMALE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS, SECRETARIES AND RECEPTIONISTS
F. AB PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATES

We are open to graduates of Ateneo, UP, DLSU, UST, UA&P, Miriam College and Assumption College
Submit your Resume (w/ 2x2 picture) to
HRD, Josol Bldg., E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave., Libis, Quezon City
Tel. No: 631-2262 to 66; e-mail add: hrd@reedleyschool.com
Website: www.reedleyschool.com

MDC-FB
JOINT VENTURE

THE JOINT VENTURE OF MAKATI DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND FIRST BALFOUR INC. HAVE RECENTLY BEEN AWARDED A MAJOR PROJECT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HEALTHCARE FACILITY IN FORT BONIFACIO AND NOW HAVE IMMEDIATE VACANCIES FOR CERTAIN PERSONNEL. PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO APPLICANTS WITH PREVIOUS HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION EXPERIENCE.

- **Finance Manager**. Certified Public Accountant. Must have at least 3 years finance/accounting experience in a managerial capacity. Construction industry experience is an advantage.
- **QA/QC Manager and QA/QC Inspectors**. Minimum 10 years experience.
- **Structural, Mechanical and Electrical Supervisors**. Minimum 10 years experience.
- **Planning Manager and Planners**. Minimum 10 years experience.
- **Mechanical and Electrical Quantity Surveyors**. Minimum 10 years experience.
- **Safety Officers**. Minimum 5 years experience.
- **Commercial Manager.** Minimum 10 years experience.
- **Chief Buyer and Assistant Buyers**. Minimum 5 years experience.
- **Chief Surveyor and Surveyors**. Minimum 5 years experience.
- **Rebar Engineers / Rebar Schedulers**. Minimum 5 years experience.
- **Assistant Construction Manager**. Minimum 5 years experience.
- **Technical Services Manager**. 10 years experience.
- **Document Controllers**. Minimum 5 years experience.

Interested applicants may send their resumés with 1x1 Photo and other credentials to:

Human Resources Group
Email: hr_recruitment@firstbalfour.com (Acrobat.pdf.file) **Email: jumawam.richard@mdc.com.ph**
Fax No. (02) 910-4141 / Phone: 910-4111
Address: 5/F Benpres Building Exchange Rd. Cor. Meralco Avenue, Ortigas, Pasig City
(We will respond to qualified applicants.)

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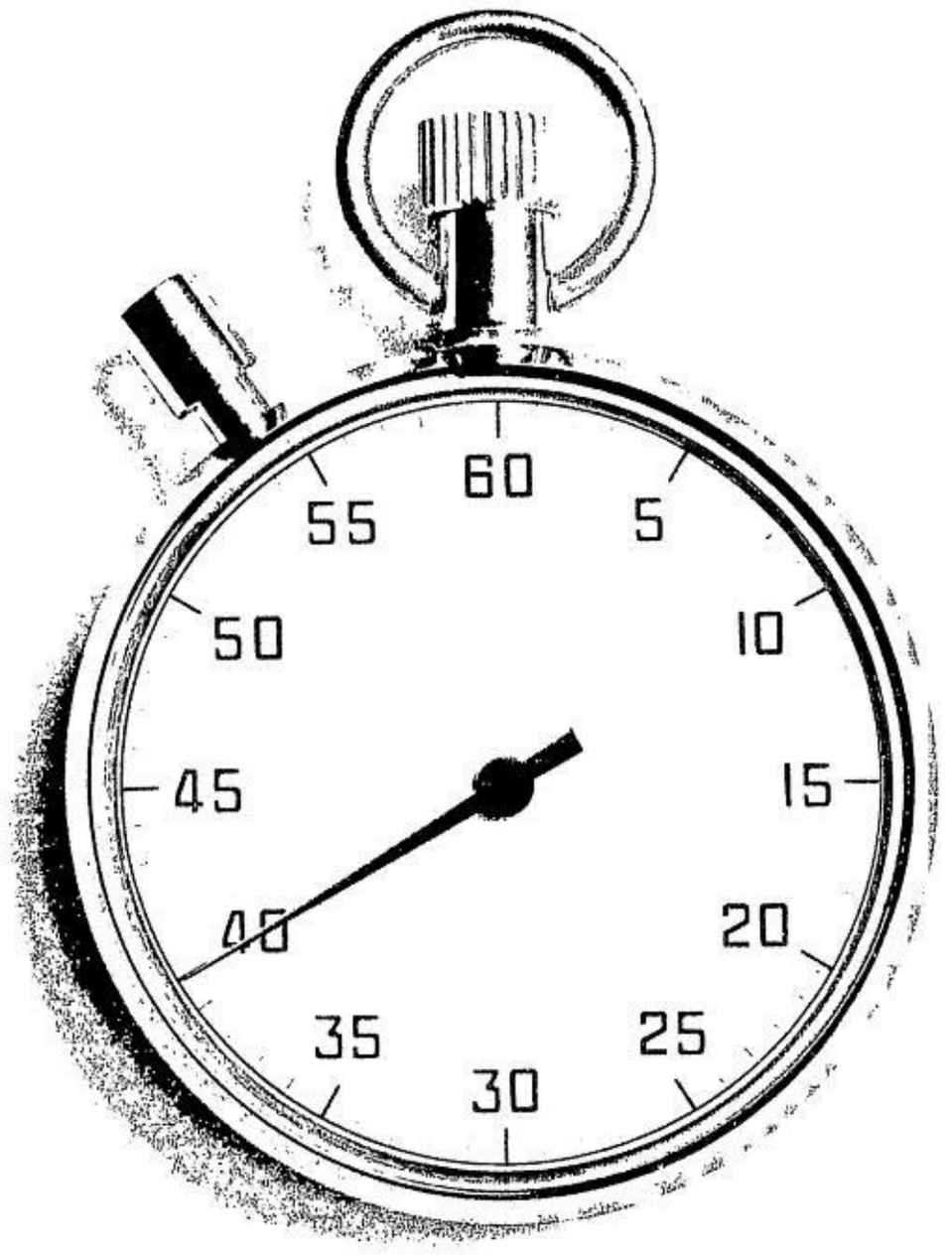

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We know the importance of creating the right environment for success. At Accenture, you can develop your skills faster than almost anywhere else. We're one of the world's leading management consulting, technology services and outsourcing companies and we help our clients become high-performance businesses. We're now building a customer contact services team in the Philippines and we want talented people to join us.

Customer Contact Agents.

Whether you are a call center professional, someone looking for a new challenge or a recent college graduate, get your career off to a great start.

We're looking for 4-year degree holders with excellent communication skills for our inbound and outbound contact center operations. As a customer contact agent for our Internet Service Provider client, you will provide technical support and handle billing inquiries. For those with outbound or financial services experience, you can be part of a pioneer account performing outbound collections and inbound customer service for a UK based utilities company.

At Accenture, you will be given diverse career options and learning opportunities to help you realize your full potential. Once hired as a customer contact agent, you will receive comprehensive training to prepare you to work at the highest level of efficiency. And as you grow in the organization, you'll enjoy the benefits of a continuous learning program to help you develop specialized skills and facilitate your personal and leadership growth. On top of these, you will receive a competitive total rewards package, including pay-for-performance incentives.

Visit our job fair from March 19 - 23, 2007, 10am to 3pm at the 3rd level, Robinsons Pioneer Mall, Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City. You could walk away with a new job on the same day!

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ETON

ETON PROPERTIES PHILIPPINES, INC.

Building with Pride

We are a member of the LUCIO TAN Group of Companies

We are a start-up company and aims to be among the leading real estate developers in the Philippines.

We have a very extensive landbank located in Makati Central Business District (CBD), Ortigas CBD Manila/Pasay/Parañaque Bay Area, Mactan Beach, Cabuyao, Calatagan and other strategic locations in the Philippines.

We will develop residential condominiums, residential housing, office buildings, condotel, commercial centers and leisure/retirement projects.

We are inviting professionals experienced in the real estate industry in all levels of the organization to join.

Applicants must be top performers in their organization, with excellent scholastic record, a team player, results-oriented and with high ethical values.

THE ETON RESIDENCES
GREENBELT
A Luxury Oasis in the Heart of Makati

Launching on April 11, 2007

An INVITATION to the BEST Real Estate PROFESSIONALS

VP OPERATIONS (Code: Realty Opns)

Responsible for sales documentation and control, customer service, customer financing, customer remittance, IT, etc.

- Graduate of any business course from reputable schools; preferably with MBA units
- With at least ten(10) years operations experience, preferably in the real estate industry
- Excellent people management skills
- Can work under pressure, mature, dynamic and hardworking

ACCOUNTING MANAGER (Code: Realty AM)

- Accounting graduate, CPA preferably with MBA.
- Five (5) years work experience in real estate accounting with at least three (3) years in a supervisory capacity.
- Must belong to top 20% of the graduating class
- Candidate must have knowledge of finance, accounting, budgeting and cost control principles.
- Have the ability to analyze financial data and prepare financial reports, and statements in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards.
- Familiar in preparing reports that are required by the Regulatory Authorities.
- With high degree of organizational, interpersonal and analytical skills.
- Preferably with experience in computerized accounting systems.

CREDIT AND COLLECTION MANAGER (Code: Realty C&C)

- With at least ten (10) years related experience preferably in a real state company or other financial institutions
- Accounting graduate; preferably with MBA units
- Highly analytical
- With excellent organizational, interpersonal and communication skills
- Team player

BUSINESS ANALYST (Code: Realty BA)

- College graduate from reputable schools, preferably Economics major
- Must belong to top 10% of graduating class
- Highly analytical
- With excellent interpersonal, communication and presentation skills
- Can work under pressure, mature, dynamic and hardworking
- Fresh graduates are welcome to apply

EXECUTIVE TRAINEES (Code: Realty ET)

To be trained to become future managers

- MBA graduate: preferably from AIM or overseas graduate school
- With at least four (4) years working experience
- Can work under pressure, mature, dynamic and hardworking
- Highly organized and analytical

MANAGEMENT TRAINEES (Code: Realty MT)

To be trained for supervisory or management positions

- Highly analytical
- Proven leadership track record in school
- Belongs to top 10% of graduating class
- College graduate of any business course from reputable school

ADMIN. ASSISTANTS (Code: Realty AA)

- Graduate of any business management course
- Must belong to top 10% of the graduating class
- Must be results driven and a team player
- Highly organized and systematic
- Fresh graduates are welcome to apply

BANK OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE (Code: Realty BOE)

- Currently holding an AVP or managerial position in a reputable commercial bank
- Must have at least ten (10) years banking operations experience
- Preferably must also have experience in Mortgage Financing, CTS financing and Overseas remittance
- Must be a team player, hard working and result-oriented
- With high scholastic records, preferably with MBA units

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS MANAGER (Code : Realty PR)

Will be responsible for securing government permits, licenses, etc.

- Must have good contacts with government agencies, LGUs, HLURB, DENR, DAR, etc.
- College graduate from reputable schools
- Preferably with at least five (5) years experience in a real estate company
- Must possess strong sense of integrity, results-driven and team player
- Must be assertive and able to work under extreme pressure

LEASING MANAGER (Code: Realty LM)

- With at least ten (10) years working experience, at least five (5) years in corporate / commercial leasing.
- Must belong to top 20% of graduating class, preferably with MBA units
- With excellent interpersonal, communication and presentation skills
- Can work under pressure, mature, dynamic and hardworking

IT OFFICER (Code: Realty IT)

- Graduate of Computer Science/Information Technology course
- With at least one (1) year experience in Web Development, (HTML,PHP, Java Script)
- Preferably with exposure in standard software development and project management methodologist
- Results oriented, resourceful, highly organized and hardworking

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (Code: Realty AO)

- With at least five (5) years experience doing administrative jobs
- Must belong to the top 20% of graduating class
- With excellent organizational, interpersonal and communication skills
- Mature, dynamic and hardworking
- Team player
- Must be willing to work overtime

RECRUITMENT OFFICER (Code: Realty RO)

- Graduate of BS Psychology
- Must belong to the top 10% of graduating class
- With at least five (5) years experience in recruitment
- With excellent organizational, interpersonal and communication skills
- Mature, dynamic and hardworking

HR ASSISTANT (Code: Realty HR)

- Graduate of Human Resources, Psychology, Behavioral Science from reputable schools
- Must possess strong personality and leadership
- Must be familiar with recruitment and testing
- Must have good communication and interpersonal skills

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANTS (Code: Realty Acctg)

- Graduate of business management course, major in Accounting
- Must belong to the top 10% of graduating class
- Must be results driven and a team player
- Highly organized and systematic
- Fresh graduates are welcome to apply

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING MANAGERS (Code:Realty IM)

- Must have an existing U.S. and/or Europe visa or with extensive travel experience
- College graduate from reputable college or universities
- With at least five (5) years sales management experience
- Preferably with experience in selling residential condominiums
- With excellent communication, presentation and negotiation skills
- Must be aggressive, results-driven, self directed and a team player

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER (Code: Realty Comm)

We are looking for a Brand & Communications Champion who will create excitement and lasting image across our business. Recommend and execute sound strategies and participate in the preparation of the company's new product lines. Identify new market opportunities, conceptualize and develop brand and communications/PR programs.

- At least 8-10 years solid experience in marketing/brand management
- Creative and has the ability to bring new concepts, ideas and products in the market
- With high scholastic records. Preferably with MBA or masteral units
- Excellent oral, written and cross cultural communication skills
- Must be a team player, hard worker and results driven.
- Ability to work with deadline and end-dates in a marketing environment

MARKETING SERVICES MANAGER (Code: Realty Services)

The Marketing Services Manager will work closely with Brand & Communications Manager, Sales Groups and Business Development Group in the execution of the company's marketing and sales programs.

- With 8-10 solid years experience in marketing services
- The candidate should be able to thrive in a fast-paced environment and approach projects with strong business sense, have flexible and adaptable mindset.
- The person should have a meticulous attention to detail as well as strong organizational/supervisory skills and the ability to handle multiple projects with competing deadlines.
- With high scholastic records, preferably with MBA or masteral units.
- With good track record in planning, executing and evaluation of sales promotions, events, exhibits and corporate tie-up programs.
- Excellent oral, written and cross cultural communication skills.
- The person must be a team player, hard worker and results driven

EVENTS MANAGER (Code: Realty EM)

- At least 8-10 years solid experience in marketing and events management
- Creative and with an ability to bring new concepts, ideas and products in the market
- With high scholastic records. Preferably with MBA or masteral units.
- Excellent oral, written and cross cultural communication skills
- Must be a team player, hard worker and results driven

MARKETING OFFICERS (Code: Realty Mktg)

Responsible for the preparation of marketing plans, market analysis and strategic formulation and events management.

- With at least five (5) years marketing experience
- Preferably with MBA units
- Creative, hardworking, and resourceful
- Graduate of marketing/Business/Communications/advertising

MARKETING ASSISTANTS (Code: Realty MA)

- Graduate of business management course, major in Marketing
- Must belong to the top 10% of graduating class
- Must be results driven and a team player
- Highly organized and systematic
- Fresh graduates are welcome to apply

CADD Operator (Code: Realty CO)

- Graduate of Bachelor's / College Degree in Civil Engineering, Architecture, or any related courses
- Must belong to the Top 20% of the graduating class.
- Must have excellent drawing application skills.
- At least one (1) year experience in CADD works

Competitive package and tremendous opportunities for career growth and development awaits successful candidates.
Qualified applicants are invited to send their resume, transcript of records and 2 x 2 picture to:
ETON PROPERTIES PHILS., INC. 12/F Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Ave., Cor. Legaspi St., Makati City or e-mail at
Etonrecruitment@yahoo.com

Gardenia

JOB VACANCIES

MANUFACTURING

ENGINEERING OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR (code: EOS)
- Graduate of Electrical Engineering; licensed
- With at least three (3) years experience in industrial plant as Engineering Supervisor or related position
- Male, 34 years old and above
- Knowledgeable in AutoCAD 2000 and MS Applications
- With knowledge in PLC, Industrial Control (Electrical) and Programming
- Strong leadership capabilities

PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR (code: PS)
- Graduate of Food Technology, Industrial Engineering, Chemical Engineering or Manufacturing Engineering Management
- 25 to 35 years old
- With at least 2-3 years working experience preferably gained in a bakery set up
- Preferably with knowledge on ISO/HACCP system
- Knowledge on TQM, BSC, and Six Sigma is an advantage
- Strong leadership capabilities, with excellent communication and interpersonal skills

MANAGEMENT ENGINEER (code: ME)
- Graduate of Engineering, preferably Industrial Engineering or Manufacturing Engineering
- Between 21 to 35 years old
- Knowledge in operations audit, methods/process improvement and ISO & HACCP procedures an advantage
- Analytical with good communication skills and can deal effectively with all levels of the organization
- Computer literate

MATERIALS PLANNER (code: MP)
- Graduate of Engineering, preferably Industrial Engineering or Manufacturing Engineering
- Male or Female, 22-35 years old
- Knowledge in ISO and HACCP requirements and procedures
- Knowledge in operation Management preferably in warehousing, inventory management, and materials requirements planning
- At least 1 year experience in manufacturing set-up

TECHNICAL ASSISTANT (code: TA)
- College graduate or at least College level
- Female, between 22-28 years old
- Single or Married
- Knowledge of AutoCAD 2000 and MS Office 2000
- With at least 1 year experience
- Computer literate

ENGINEERING ANALYST (code: EA)
- Licensed Mechanical/Electrical Engineer
- Knowledge in AutoCAD and Microsoft Office
- Male, 22-36 years old
- Knowledge in industrial plant maintenance
- With at least 2 years experience in industrial plant as Engineering technician or related position

ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN (code: ET)
- Graduate of vocational course or 3 years course
- Male, 22-36 years old
- At least 2-3 years experience as calibration technician
- Knowledge in maintenance and troubleshooting of Machine

MATERIAL HANDLING SYSTEM CONTROLLER (code:MHSC)
- College graduate
- Male, preferably single
- With previous experience in food manufacturing set-up
- Computer literate, analytical and can work under minimum supervision

INGREDIENTS PREPARATION PERSONNEL (code: IPP)
- College Level or graduate of vocational course
- Male, 23 to 28 years old
- Preferably single
- With experience in manufacturing company
- With analytical skills/medium built

PRODUCTION OPERATORS (code: PO)
- At least high school graduate
- Male/Female; between 18 to 28 years old
- Preferably with knowledge in ISO and HACCP systems
- With at least one (1) year work experience in the production line
- Willing to work on shifting schedules

QUALITY ASSURANCE

QUALITY ASSURANCE STAFF (code: QAS)
- Graduate of Food Technology, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry and Food Microbiology
- Male or Female, 21 to 28 years old
- Preferably with knowledge in food analysis and baking science & technology.
- Aggressive, analytical, hardworking, & can deal effectively with all levels of the organization
- Computer literate

BAKING TECHNOLOGY

R & D STAFF (code: RDS)
- College graduate of any four (4) year course preferably BS HRM
- Preferably male, between 20 to 23 years old
- At least one (1) year experience in manufacturing company
- Fast learner and diligent

SALES

SALES SUPERVISOR (code: SS)
- College graduate preferably a Business course
- Male or Female, 23 to 30 years old
- With at least 3 years experience in selling preferably in a fast moving consumer goods
- Computer literate with excellent communication skills

JUNIOR SALESMEN (code: JSM)
- At least college level
- Male, between 23 to 34 years old
- Holder of professional driver's license with restriction code # 1, 2 & 3; can drive delivery vans
- With good communication skills and can deal with different kinds of people
- Hardworking and results oriented
- Experience in route selling is an advantage

FEEDER CREW (code: FC)
- At least college level
- Male, between 26 to 35 years old
- Holder of professional driver's license with restriction code # 1, 2 & 3
- With good communication skills

ADMINISTRATION

MIS HEAD (code: MH)
- Male/Female
- Graduate of 4 years computer course (Computer Science, Information Technology and Computer Engineering)
- With 2-3 years relevant experience
- Proficient in system analysis and design, database design and creation
- With experience in ERP set-up and implementation
- Programming knowledge
- Good communication and interpersonal skills

OPERATIONAL AND SYSTEMS COMPLIANCE OFFICER (code: OSCO)
- Graduate of BS Accountancy
- Preferably Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- Male, between 28-35 years old
- With at least 4 years experience in audit work (all phases of audit)
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Computer literate

SERVICE COMPLIANCE OFFICER (code: SCO)
- Graduate of BS Accountancy
- Preferably Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- Male, between 28-35 years old
- With at least 3 years experience in field audit
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Computer literate

PROGRAMMER (code: P)
- Graduate of 4 years computer course (Computer Science, Information Technology and Computer Engineering)
- Male, 21-28 years old
- Proficient in system analysis and design, database, programming language using VBG, VB NET, database administration using MS SQL and ORACLE
- With at least 6 months experience as programmer

TRAINING SPECIALIST (code: TS)
- Female, 25-30 years old
- Graduate of AB/BS Psychology, Behavioral Science or any related course
- With 2 years experience in Training and Development
- Computer literate

C & C COLLECTOR (code: CC)
- College graduate of any four (4) year Business course
- Male, between 24 to 28 years old
- At least one (1) year experience in the same capacity
- Must have background in credit investigation
- With experience in driving motorcycle

Qualified applicants will be based in **Mamplasan, Biñan, Laguna.** You can send your letter of application indicating position applied for, comprehensive resume with 2x2 photo thru:

E – mail : **hrd@gardenia.com.ph**
Fax : **(02) 809 – 6728 / (049) 539 – 1148**
Tel Nos. : **(049) 539 – 1136 to 40/(02) 889-8890**
Mail : **GARDENIA BAKERIES (PHILS.), INC.**
Gardenia Centre, Star Avenue,
Laguna International Industrial Park (LIIP),
Mamplasan, Biñan, Laguna

PO Box 40, LIIP Mamplasan, 4038 Biñan, Laguna

AVIATION PARTNERSHIP PHILIPPINES

A+

A joint venture between SIA Engineering Company and Cebu Pacific

Needs high-performing individuals to fill the following key positions:

DIRECTOR, Quality and Safety Management

This person reports directly to the General Manager, and has overall authority in the enforcement of Aircraft Inspection, Quality and Safety Management systems and procedures that ensure methods, materials, equipment, facilities and workmanship conform to the standards of the RP-ATO Civil Air Regulations and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore.

The candidate should be/have:
- A graduate of a 4-year aviation-related course;
- An RP-ATO license (Mechanic's and/or Specialist's)
- At least 5 years experience in Quality Control;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Analytical and results-oriented;
- Excited with the prospect of helping in the growth of a young company;
- Enjoys being with people and having fun while working hard.

TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTRUCTOR, Airframe and Powerplant

This person reports directly to the Deputy General Manager. He is responsible in the determination of the training needs of all Operations personnel, the preparation of training curriculum and the conduct of training courses.

The candidate should be/have:
- A graduate of a 4-year aviation-related course;
- At least 2 years experience as a Technical Instructor
- A valid RP-ATO Ground Instructor's License
- An RP-ATO license (Mechanic's and/or Specialist's) would be an advantage
- Excellent communication skills;
- Comfortable in dealing with people at any level;
- Analytical and results-oriented;
- Excited with the prospect of helping in the growth of young company;
- Enjoys being with people and having fun while working hard.

QUALIFIED CANDIDATES ARE INVITED TO SEND THEIR COMPREHENSIVE RESUMÉS TO:
Aviation Partnership (Phils.) Corporation
Airline Operations Center
8006 Domestic Road, Pasay City 1301
or e-mail to: dianne.delostrinos@aplus.com.ph
We will only respond to suitable candidates.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Maxicare

Maxicare Healthcare Corporation, a top HMO serving some of the country's best employers of choice with over a quarter-of-a-million membership nationwide, through our impressive roster of over 8,000 Affiliated Specialists, Fellows and Diplomates and more than 330 hospitals and clinics.

Ultimately, it is only at Maxicare where you experience. . . . . ***"healthcare at its finest".***

We want you if you are looking for a competitive compensation and benefits package.

For the following positions:

Corporate Accounts Assistant

The position is responsible for the implementation of administrative and sales support services to ensure client satisfaction, 100% account retention and achievement of the projected sales targets. The CAA directly reports to the Accounts Management Officer (AMO).

Requirements:
- Responsible in assisting Accounts Officer in servicing handling documentation of accounts
- Preferably Marketing or Management graduate
- Fresh graduates are welcome
- At ease with multi-tasking, goal driven and strong organizing skills;
- Team oriented
- Must be an effective communicator, displays above average analytical skills
- With high level of stress tolerance and well-honed interpersonal skills.
- With good charisma and unquestionable character
- Willing to work extended hours

Corporate Accounts Officer - New Business

Responsible for generating / expanding sales revenues thru new business acquisition and manages the accounts to ensure customer retention.

Requirements:
- Preferably Marketing or Management graduate or equivalent.
- Medical allied course graduate are also welcome
- 1 to 2 years experience in Sales industry
- Must have proven track record in sales and business development
- Excellent skills in interpersonal communications, influencing & relationship building;
- Required skills: negotiation and presentation skills
- Strong leadership capability
- Can established good rapport with internal and external clients
- Good team player and can work with minimum supervision
- Willing to travel
- With good charisma and unquestionable character

Corporate Accounts Officer - Renewal

Responsible for generating / expanding sales revenues from existing portfolio of accounts (renewal business) and manages the accounts to ensure customer retention.

Requirements:
- Preferably Marketing or Management graduate or equivalent.
- Medical allied course graduate are also welcome
- 1 to 2 years experience in Sales industry
- Exceptionally good in accounts management with proven strong track record in sales
- Excellent negotiation and presentation skills
- Preferred skills: Project management, assertive and can work under pressure.
- Strong leadership capability
- Can established good rapport with internal and external clients
- Good team player and can work with minimum supervision
- Willing to travel
- With good charisma and unquestionable character

Sales Manager

Responsible for generating / expanding sales revenues thru new business acquisition, from existing portfolio of accounts (renewal business) and manages the accounts to ensure customer retention.

Requirements:
- High degree of comfort in being competitive
- Must be articulate with above average communication skills
- Required skills: leadership and management. Proactive.
- With analytic and strategic thinking ability
- Displays high level of integrity and ability to maintain confidentiality
- Dynamic and result oriented. Proven ability in meeting or exceeding sales targets
- Experience in HMO or any related business is an advantage.
- Excellent communication (oral and written) and people skills

Customer Care Representative - Roving / Call center / ACU

Responsible for the correct implementation of Member's healthcare benefit policy and the delivery of superior customer service at all times. Facilitates and monitors in-patient availments at hospitals within assigned area.

Requirements:
- Preferably Medical allied course graduate (except for nursing).
- Fresh graduates are welcome.
- Displays high level of TLC (tender love and care)
- With good charisma and unquestionable character
- Above average communication skills (both oral and written)
- Willing to travel
- Can established good rapport with internal and external clients
- With high level of stress tolerance and can work under pressure.

Treasury Analyst (Billing and Collection)

Facilitates prompt collection of accounts by means of timely and accurate billing statements and accounting records; provides assistance to the Treasury Supervisor in overseeing the acceptance and release of funds.

Requirements:
- Must at least have a Bachelor's degree (BS Accountancy or related field) from a college/ university
- Fresh graduates are welcome.
- Effective analytical and decision making skills
- Can established good rapport with internal and external clients
- With high level of stress tolerance and can work under pressure
- Willing to work extended hours

For Interested applicants, you may email your updated resumé at julie.llanes@maxicare.com.ph

You may also visit our website at www.maxicare.com.ph *for other job openings*

Preference will be given to applicants who can start working right away.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Batasan Pambansa Complex., Constitution Hills
Quezon City
Tel. No. 931-8101

The **Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services: Kapangyarihan at Kaunlaran sa mga Barangay (KALAHI-CIDSS: KKB)**, the flagship poverty alleviation project of the Republic of the Philippines implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), is looking for **Senior and Junior Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers** to join the project's Regional Project Management Offices (Regions CAR, 4-B, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and Caraga)

Scope of the Job:

The RM&E Officer is in charge of monitoring and evaluating the Project's progress and performance at the regional level, which includes data collection and storage, survey work and analytical sessions undertaken at the regional level, and undertaking researches and special studies set forth in the Project's Research Agenda. S/he is also in charge of monitoring the installation and functionality of the Project's Grievance Redress System at the regional level, ensuring quick response to questions and expediting the resolution of grievances.

Terms of Reference:

Senior RM&E Officer
1. Ensure implementation of M&E system at the regional and field levels
2. Be responsible for the review and analysis of reports from the field levels, preparation of regular and on-demand reports
3. Undertake special studies and researches in accordance with the Project's Research Agenda
4. Facilitate the resolution of grievances and conduct content analysis of grievances
5. Provide coaching and technical assistance on M&E to Regional Project Management and Area Coordination Teams
6. Facilitate and coordinate M&E activities at the regional level

Junior RM&E Officer
1. Assist the Senior RM&E Officer in the preparation of reports, studies and other reportorial requirements
2. Manage the data collected from the field, which includes data consolidation and intake and monitoring of resolutions of grievances
3. Provide coaching and technical assistance on M&E to Area Coordination Teams
4. Facilitate and coordinate M&E activities at the regional level
5. Ensure the compliance of the ACTs to the reportorial requirements

Qualification Standards:

Senior RM&E Officer
1. A degree in a relevant field
2. At least 3 years experience in Monitoring and Evaluation work, or 3 years combined experience in M&E and in research
3. Familiarity with rural development, participatory processes and monitoring and evaluation tasks and processes
4. High proficiency in Microsoft Office applications, at least in Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Ability to perform complex tasks using Excel formulas and tools.
5. Willingness to work in an assigned regional office, undertake field work and interact with different stakeholders
6. Demonstrated analytical report writing skills (samples to be submitted)
7. Good oral and written communication skills
8. Can work under pressure and with minimal supervision
9. Ability to motivate, train, direct and coordinate with other staff
10. Proficiency in the use of statistical software is an advantage

Junior RM&E Officer
1. A degree in a relevant field
2. At least 2 years relevant work experience or research experience
3. Familiarity with rural development, participatory processes and monitoring and evaluation tasks and processes
4. High proficiency in Microsoft Office applications, at least in Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Ability to perform complex tasks using Excel formulas and tools.
5. Willingness to work in an assigned regional office, undertake field work and interact with different stakeholders
6. Demonstrated analytical report writing skills (samples to be submitted)
7. Good oral and written communication skills
8. Can work under pressure and with minimal supervision
9. Ability to motivate, train, direct and coordinate with other staff

Interested applicants may send their curriculum vitae and samples of analytical reports written to the KALAHI-CIDSS National Project Management Office, 4th floor DSWD Central Office, Constitution Hills, Batasan Complex, QC., or to email **kc_me_central@yahoo.com.** Deadline for submission of applications is on March 23, 2007.

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The WHOLESALE ELECTRICITY SPOT MARKET (WESM) is a centralized venue for buyers and sellers to engage in the trading of electricity as a commodity.

Join the dynamic team behind the newest electricity market in the world. Qualified individuals with a deep sense of professionalism and high regard for excellence are invited to send their resumes for the following career opportunities:

SOFTWARE ENGINEER (1)

- Graduates in any Engineering, Mathematics, Accounting and/or Computer courses
- At least two (2) years experience in developing web application, web publishing and server administration
- Comprehensive knowledge and experience in programming procedures and languages preferably C/C++, Fortran, Java, Visual Basic and/or ORACLE Developer
- Open to travel and willing to work on 24 x 7 schedule and be able to meet deadlines under pressure

RESEARCH & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (1)

- Graduates of Finance, Economics, Statistics or Electrical Engineering preferably with Master's Degree or Units in Business, Finance and Economics
- At least four (4) years solid experience in business development, research, corporate planning and development, finance, marketing or economics preferably gained from an energy/power or research company
- Three (3) years supervisory experience shall have a definite advantage
- Proficient in developing new business products for market participants, power industry investors, government agencies, market service providers and the general public
- Knowledgeable in preparing market research and white papers pertaining to the financial and economic aspect of the industry
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, highly literate in computer applications/ programming, open to travel, willing to be trained and be able to work beyond normal working hours

MARKET PROJECTIONS ENGINEER (2)

- Registered Electrical Engineers with at least 2 years work experience in power system planning and analysis, power system economics, research and operations
- Experience with large data sets and analysis of electric market performance or other market oriented industry is preferred
- Relevant experience in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) is an advantage
- Must be knowledgeable in Engineering simulation tools and softwares, computer networks and database structures
- Must possess excellent analytical/mathematical and reasoning skills
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, highly literate in computer applications and programming
- A team player with strong interpersonal skills and be able to work with minimum supervision
- Willing to be trained and be able to work beyond normal working hours and open to travel

MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICER (1)

- Graduate of Mass Communications with 3-5 years work experience in the related fields of advertising and public relations
- Have excellent oral and written communication skills, as well as presentation and project management skills
- While past experience in dealing with the press is an advantage, a charming and patient personality with strong interpersonal skills is a must
- A good team player, open-minded, flexible, and organized
- He or she must be willing to learn about the complexities of the power industry and handle pressure gracefully
- Candidates must be between 27-35 years old

Successful candidates can expect a competitive compensation package, career advancement opportunities in a dynamic work environment. Interested applicants may send their application letter (stating position applied for), curriculum vitae with project accomplishments, diploma, transcript of records and other relevant supporting documents to –

HROD – Corporate Services Group
18th floor Robinsons Equitable Tower
ADB Ave. Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1600
Email : hrd@wesm.ph Website : www.wesm.ph

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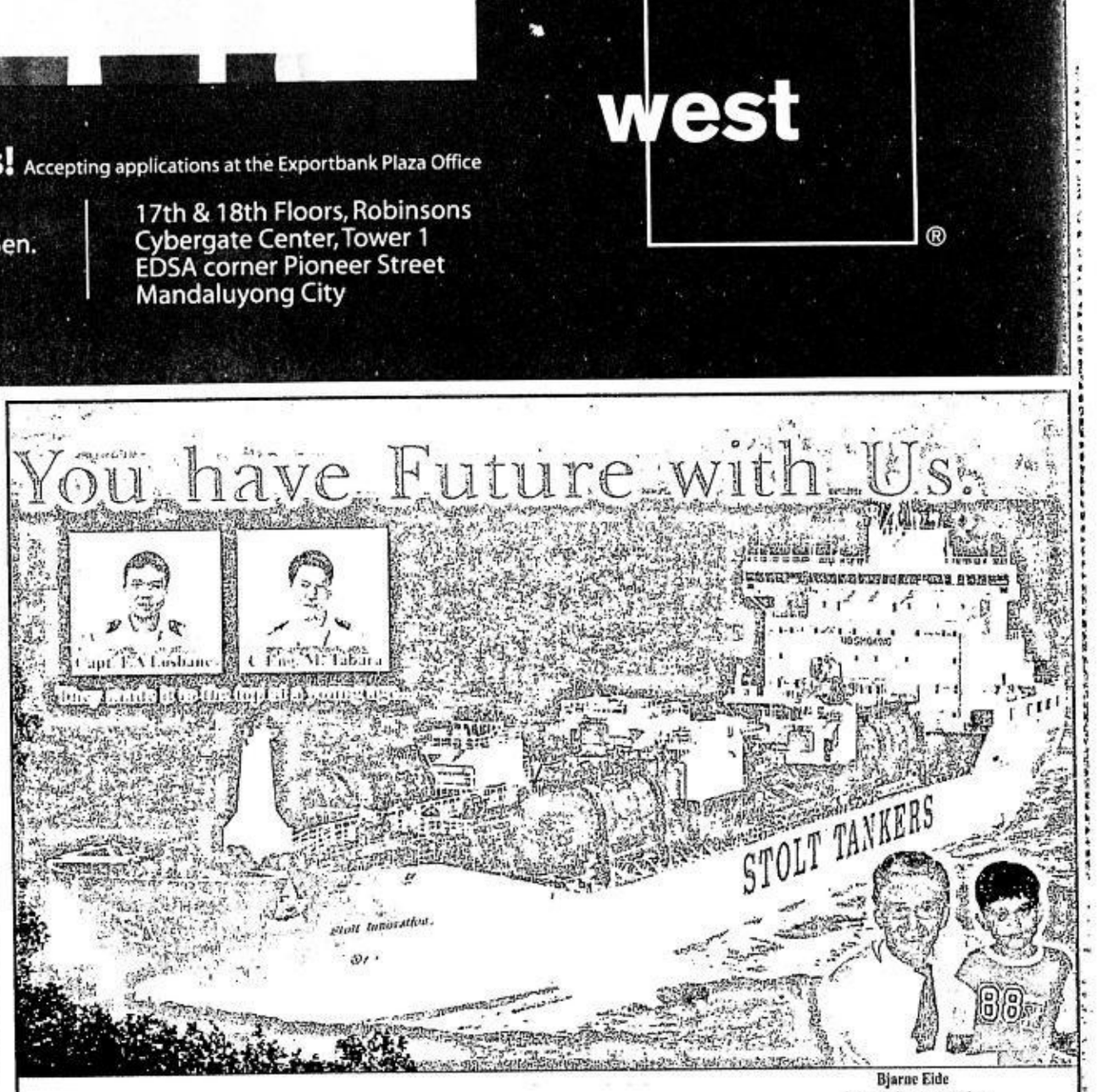

Bjarne Eide
Owner's Representative

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We are in NEED of

All Marine OFFICERS and RATINGS
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We commit in providing highly competitive package.

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GEF UNDP

Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Program

The PELMAT Project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and implemented by the Department of Energy (DOE) is in search of qualified candidates for the following vacant positions to be based at the DOE Office in Taguig City.

The PELMATP is intended to address the barriers to widespread utilization of energy efficient lighting (EEL) systems in the Philippines.

1. Task Specialist - Information, Education and Communication Initial duration of employment is one (1) year, but may be extended based on performance; directly supervised by Project Director.

Duties and Responsibilities

The IEC Specialist shall be responsible in providing technical inputs as well as administrative to the PMO on various activities of the project specifically on the aspects of information, education and communications. He/she will coordinate logistics, monitor the conduct of the activities according to specified/agreed timetable, evaluate the outputs and outcomes of the activities, and provide recommendations to address the activity level for the EEL Applications Consumer Awareness Improvement Program.

He/she shall assist the Project Manager in formulating strategies towards the institutionalization and long-term sustainability of the above-mentioned PELMATP Project components. He or she shall also be responsible for adherence to the prescribed management criteria (e.g., approved terms of reference, contractual obligations, quality control, etc) are followed in the execution of the activities under the above-cited project components. He/she will also be responsible in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these activities according to the prescribed procedures. Specific activities include the following:

- Regular reporting to Project Manager on the status of project activities vis-à-vis target outputs;
- Synthesis of the activities and outputs of consultants and subcontractors involved in the said Project Components;
- Provision of assistance in managing project risk;
- Provision of technical inputs during the conduct of annual advisory group meetings and the quarterly TWG meetings and in the preparation of quarterly financial/project progress reports; and,
- Provision of technical inputs in the preparation of annual project reports (APR) and others as required by the UNDP.
- Preparation of a system of measuring/tracking impacts of IEC activities carried out under the project.

The Specialist will also undertake various administrative activities that may be deemed necessary in the expedient performance of his/her duties and responsibilities under the PELMATP Project.

Qualification and Experience

- Bachelors Degree in social sciences, public administration, communications or engineering; preferably with Masters Degree in the same or any other relevant field.
- Minimum 5 years experience in information, education and communication programs preferably in the energy sector.
- Proven track record in project management such as in meeting deadlines, timely submission of acceptable deliverables, etc.;
- Excellent English communication skills, both written and verbal;
- With good appreciation of and strong links with government agencies, LGUs, NGOs, academe and professional organizations involved in the energy sector; and
- With satisfactory skills on the use of office software packages such as MS Word, Excel and Power Point.

2. Administrative Officer Initial duration of employment is one (1) year, but may be extended based on performance; directly supervised by Project Director.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Administrative Officer shall be responsible in providing administrative support to the operations of PMO, supervising administrative staff and ensuring the smooth functioning of administrative systems under the project. Specifically, the Administrative Officer shall be responsible for the following tasks:

- Establishment of administrative system and procedures consistent with UNDP's national execution mode, in the form of a Manual, for the guidance of project staff, consultants and subcontractors;
- Establishment of a record of management system for the project both in paper and electronic;
- Maintenance of files of all personnel, consultants and subcontractors actively engaged in the project;
- Preparation and maintenance of travel plans and procurement plans for the project;
- Supervision of the procurement of equipment, supplies and sundries as may be needed in the Project, in accordance with UNDP guidelines;
- Maintenance of an updated inventory of all supplies and equipment and prepares guidelines for the proper use and maintenance of office equipment and properties;
- Supervision of the overall administrative activities related to project implementation; and
- Preparation of annual and quarterly work plan of activities for approval by DOE.
- Assistance to the technical operations of PMO;
- Monitoring of project activities and outputs;
- Secretarial support to workshops, seminars and trainings; and
- Other technical inputs in the various project activities as may be applicable to his/her academic background.

Qualification and Experience

- Bachelors Degree in public administration, business management, social sciences, and economics, preferably with Masters Degree in business management or any other relevant field.
- Minimum 5 years experience as business manager or office administrator.
- Proven track record in project management such as in meeting deadlines, timely submission of acceptable deliverables, etc.;
- Excellent English communication skills, both written and verbal;
- With satisfactory skills on the use of office software packages such as MS Word, Excel and Power Point,
- Good interpersonal and communication skills.

3. Information Technology Specialist Initial duration of employment is one (1) year, but may be extended based on performance; directly supervised by Project Director.

Duties and Responsibilities

The PMO IT Specialist shall be responsible for the management and maintenance of Project's database system and website. He or she will coordinate logistics, monitoring the conduct of the activities according to specified/agreed timetable and provide recommendations to better the collection of information/data/reports from PELMATP activities. Specifically, he/she will be responsible to undertake the following tasks:

- Design and maintains the Project Work Plan and Budget (Project Information Management) software;
- Coordinates data management and collection of project information from different PELMATP activities;
- Manages and maintains PELMATP database and website and orients staff on their use;
- Reports regularly to the Project Manager on the status of project activities vis-à-vis target outputs;
- Provides administrative and technical inputs in the preparation of project reports; and
- Assist in the design of information, education and communication materials for Component 3-EEL Application Consumer Awareness Program of PELMATP.

Qualification and Experience

- Bachelors Degree in information technology, computer management or computer engineering;
- Minimum 2 years experience in information technology and/or computer systems and software management, preferably with good knowledge of LINUX, MICROSOFT, and other Project Management/Information Systems software;
- Excellent English communication skills, both written and verbal,
- With satisfactory skills on the use of office software packages such as MS Word, Excel and Power Point.

4. Science Research Specialist Initial duration of employment is one (1) year, but may be extended based on performance; directly supervised by Project Director

Duties and Responsibilities

The Science Research Specialist shall be hired to provide necessary administrative and technical support to the operations of Lighting and Appliances Testing Laboratory, particularly in the aspects of EEL systems testing as prescribed in Component 2 – EEL Application Institutional and Technical Capacity Development of PELMATP.

The PMO Science Research Specialists shall have the following tasks:

- Receive, schedule, track and dispose test samples;
- Assist in the preparation of laboratory test reports;
- Assist in the updating and implementation of the laboratory's quality system;
- Assist in the operation and maintenance of testing facilities;
- Assist in the conduct of research/study/information dissemination, preparation of reports related to energy efficiency improvements of lighting;
- Assist in data gathering/information of energy standards compliance for various lighting products;
- Handle the collection and remittance of testing fees; and
- Prepare/submit accomplishment reports.

Qualification/Experience

- Bachelors Degree in engineering, preferably an Electrical Engineering graduate;
- Relevant work experience is an advantage;
- With satisfactory skills on the use of office software packages such as MS Word and Excel; and
- Good interpersonal and communication skills.

All application letters and comprehensive resumes should reach our office on or before March 28, 2007. Address applications to the PELMATP Project, Human Resource Department, Department of Energy, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Taguig, Metro Manila.

This advertisement shall remain posted in www.doe.gov.ph until March 28, 2007.

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An award-winning agency known for its innovative communications programs, TeamAsia is growing rapidly and seeks people who are — or who could become — world-class professionals for these exciting positions:

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- **Editorial Associates** with cutting-edge copywriting skills who can service TeamAsia's editorial, creative and public relations requirements.

If you seek the privilege and excitement of interfacing with top executives and major international personalities, and would enjoy playing an integral role in producing world-class events or conceptualizing and implementing innovative marketing communications programs, contact us immediately. Send your resume and a short cover letter to careers@teamasia.com or telefax (632) 757 3510. For more information on TeamAsia, visit www.teamasia.com.

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- ✓ Male or female 25-35 years old
- ✓ Graduate of 4-year course, preferably with work experience in related field
- ✓ Must be creative & well-versed in marketing & promotional tasks & activities
- ✓ Must have initiative and can follow through activities independently
- ✓ Must have the tolerance to work on multiple projects simultaneously
- ✓ Excellent verbal and written skills
- ✓ Outgoing, personable and able to relate well with others

SALES SUPERVISOR/STAFF

- ✓ Female 22-28 years old
- ✓ Preferably college graduate
- ✓ Pleasant looking w/ good selling skills
- ✓ Matured, responsible & hardworking
- ✓ Willing to work on Sundays/holidays

JR. GRAPHIC ARTIST

- ✓ Male/Female 22-28 years old
- ✓ College graduate or equivalence
- ✓ With knowledge of corel, photoshop
- ✓ Hardworking, resourceful and fast learner
- ✓ Knows PC troubleshooting

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT

- ✓ Female, single, 21-27 years old
- ✓ Accounting graduate preferably with experience in bookkeeping and handling of government reports
- ✓ Computer literate
- ✓ Works well with minimum supervision

MAIL COMPREHENSIVE RESUMÉ WITH PHOTO TO:

DIAGON Inc.
Unit 94 Goldloop Towers Cond.
St. J. Escriva Drive Ortigas Center
Pasig City, Metro Manila 1605
Cell Phone # 0922-8883549

KEPCO ILIJAN CORPORATION

A subsidiary of Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) engaged in the Power Generation activity in the Philippines is in need of the following:

COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER

- ✓ Bachelors Degree (Community Development or Social Work)
- ✓ Male/Female, not more than 40 years old
- ✓ Preferably with experience in Community organization, development social work, or rural integrated development work
- ✓ Can relate to different levels in the organization
- ✓ Willing to do field work
- ✓ Willing to be assigned in Batangas City

BUILDING & FACILITIES SUPERVISOR

- ✓ Licensed Civil Engineer / Architect
- ✓ With at least 8 years experience in architectural and civil construction and maintenance or at least 4 years as Building and Facilities Staff, experience in Power Plant would be an advantage
- ✓ Knowledgeable in Microsoft Office, AUTOCAD, MICROSTATION
- ✓ Able to relate and communicate with external contacts
- ✓ Male/female not more than 35 years old
- ✓ Willing to be assigned in Batangas City

Interested applicants may send their resumé on or before March 31, 2007 to:

E-mail : **hrteam@kepcophilippines.com**
Fax : (02)848-0062
Mail : 18/F Citibank Tower
8741 Paseo de Roxas
Salcedo Village, Makati City

Pacific Consultants International Asia, Inc.

Chief Resident Engineers / Resident Engineers / Bridge Engineers / Contract Specialists / Geotechnical Engineers

Pacific Consultants International Asia, Inc., a multidisciplinary consultancy firm with headquarters in Manila, Philippines and a wholly owned subsidiary of PCI Japan, is undertaking a number of major infrastructure development projects.
We urgently require a Resident and Contracts Specialist Engineer in Pakistan and Rural Road and Infrastructure Engineer in Philippines starting immediately.

Positions available at present are for Chief Resident Engineers / Team Leaders, Resident Engineers, Bridge Engineers, Contract Specialists and Geotechnical Engineers who meet the following requirements:

- Degree qualified (post graduate qualification an advantage);
- A minimum of 20 years total professional experience;
- A minimum of 10 years experience on international construction works;
- Thorough knowledge of standards and specifications for major highways and/or bridge construction as relevant. Experience of FIDIC conditions of contract preferred.
- Competent project management and construction supervision skills such as: monitoring & recording progress of the works, checking & verifying quantities measured, ensuring quality control testing is carried out and design standards are followed and preparing and issuing notices and required reports.

The above positions are available now, however we would also like to hear from professionals who would be interested in future work opportunities.

Excellent terms and conditions are on offer and long term employment is envisaged within this rapidly expanding organization.

Please email your Curriculum Vitae and covering letter to us at: **recruit@pciasia.com**

Please quote the following reference in your reply: **REF: PCIA MAR07 AD.**

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invites young professionals to join its challenging and dynamic team for a rewarding career:

Senior Accountant(s) / Associate Accountant(s)

- ✓ Must be Certified Public Accountant
- ✓ Not more than 28 years old
- ✓ Good understanding of accounting policies, practices and general accounting concepts and the application thereof
- ✓ Computer literate; with hands-on experience on the use of accounting software packages is a definite advantage
- ✓ Good oral & written communication skills
- ✓ Strong interpersonal and organizational skills
- ✓ Ability to work under pressure and with tight deadlines
- ✓ Self-motivated and can work independently
- ✓ Demonstrate high integrity

Please mail/drop application letter, resumé with 2x2 ID picture, contact no. & relevant documents (Transcript of Records, CPA Board Results, etc.).

The HR Manager
Millennium Business Services, Inc.
22nd Floor, 139 Corporate Center
139 Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227
Telephone No. 818-9492 loc 260 Fax No. 893-6257

You may also send your resumé to mularca@mbsi.com.ph / central@mbsi.com.ph.

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Suite 603 The Manila Luxury
Pearl Drive cor. Gold Loop, Ortigas Center
Pasig City, Metro Manila
Email add: **ppaslaw@skyinet.net**

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Calling all I.T. GRADUATES and PROFESSIONALS

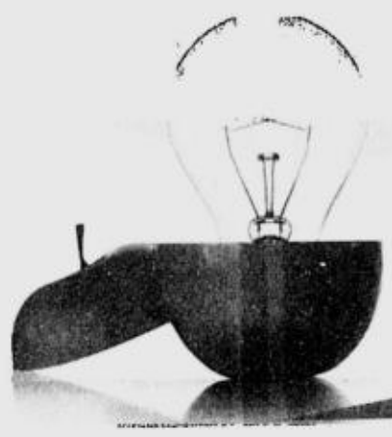
You are invited to our

Open House Recruitment

When: March 24, 2007 (Saturday)
7:00 am to 3:00 pm

Where: 23/F IBM Plaza Bldg. Eastwood City
Cyberpark, Libis, Quezon City

What to Bring: Resume



THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY

IS IN NEED OF:

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY INSPECTORS (ICASI)

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's Degree in any Engineering Course. Psychology, ECE and IT related course is an advantage.
- With Professional License or Career Service Professional Eligibility;
- FEMALE, 5'4" in height, between 21 to 25 years old;
- Possesses excellent interpersonal, presentation and English communication skills both written and verbal.
- Highly proficient in MS Word, Excel and Powerpoint
- Highly organized and systematic.

Qualified applicants will be trained by ICAO accredited Training Center(s) and/or recognized AVSEC Training Institution in the Philippines. Successful applicants shall oversee all aviation security and quality control tasks as required by the ASP and NCASP to meet and sustain ICAO Annex 17 Standard 3.4.7 at the airport level.

Qualified applicants are invited to submit personally the following:

1. Resume / Personal Data Sheet (PDS);
2. Recent 2x2 picture;
3. Latest Community Tax Certificate;
4. Photocopy of Diploma or Transcript of Records;
5. Photocopy of Certificate of training / seminars attended;
6. Certificate of Eligibility Rating (CSC), if any;
7. NBI Clearance.

Bring original copy of item nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7 for authentication to:

LBP SERVICE CORPORATION
Unit C & D, 21/F Petron Megaplaza Building
Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City
Trunkline: (02) 843-2077 locals 213 / 214

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION IS ON MARCH 30, 2007

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Submit application directly at the G/f Belson House, 271 EDSA, Mandaluyong City or by email to gsc_reception@pldtdsl.net. Call 721-7135 or 721-6412 for more details.

FOR URGENT AND IMMEDIATE HIRING

ACCOUNTANT

- Male, 22 - 26 years old
- With at least 1 year experience
- Preferably with auditing work experience
- Bachelor of Science in Accountancy graduate
- CPA is an advantage
- Knowledgeable in Microsoft Office
- With pleasing personality, possessing good oral and written communication skills
- Can handle pressure and willing to work long hours

TRADERS

- Male, 20 - 22 years old
- Graduate of Marketing or any Business Related courses from reputable schools
- Highly motivated, hardworking, team player, and result oriented
- Excellent communication skills (spoken and written)
- Knowledgeable in Microsoft Office
- Can handle pressure and willing to work long hours
- New Graduates are preferred

SALES SERVICE ASSOCIATE

- Female, 20 - 22 years old
- Graduate of any Business or Communications course
- Good command in English and Chinese (Mandarin/Fukien)
- Knowledgeable in Microsoft Office
- Can handle pressure and willing to work long hours
- New Graduates are acceptable

Interested Applicants may submit their resumé at
mlc_hr@yahoo.com

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

PROJECT MANAGER
- Male, Licensed Civil Engr. w/ at least 10 yrs. exp. in road const.

PROJECT ENGINEER
- Male, Licensed Civil Engr. w/ at least 5 yrs. exp. in road const.

SURVEY ENGR. / FIELD ENGR. / MATERIALS ENGR.
- M/F, Licensed Civil Engr. w/ at least 2 yrs. exp. in road const.

CIVIL ENGINEER
- Newly Graduate or with experience

FOREMAN / LEADMAN
- Male w/ at least 2 years experience in road construction

LABORATORY TECHNICIAN (LAB. TECH.)
- Male w/ at least 2 yrs. Exp. in laboratory & Field Testing

TIMEKEEPER / CHECKER / WAREHOUSEMAN
- College undergraduate at least

DIESEL MECHANIC / HEAVY EQUIPMENT MECHANIC
- Male at least 20 yrs. old, w/ at least 2 yrs. experience

BACKHOE OPERATOR / CRANE OPERATOR
- Male at least 20 yrs. old, w/ at least 2 yrs. experience

Submit your resumé together with Transcript of Records & Certification of Employment.

C.M. PANCHO CONSTRUCTION, INC. – ADMIN
#71-A Scout Borromeo St., Diliman Quezon City
(beside Francesca Tower along Edsa) You can visit us our website at www.cmpancho.com or call us at Tel. No. 9242456 or 9242167 (look for Julie Ann)

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

HINGE INQUIRER PUBLICATIONS, a dynamic company engaged in the publication of the most influential niche magazines today, is in immediate need of the following:

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

The Account Executive will have a primary responsibility of acquiring advertising placements for assigned Hinge Inquirer Publication magazines.

- Generate new revenue through sales of advertising placements and event sponsorships according to set company quotas
  - ☐ Prospecting
  - ☐ Conduct of sales presentations
  - ☐ Development of proposals
  - ☐ Negotiation/Closing
- Account Management
- Participation in marketing initiatives/events

REQUIREMENTS:

- Male/Female, 21 to 30 years old
- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/College Degree in Business Studies/Advertising/Management, Sales & Marketing, or equivalent
- Highly motivated, a team player, with good communication, negotiation and presentation skills, thrives under pressure and can work with minimal supervision
- Applicants must be willing to work in Makati City and do field work
- Preferably has at least 1 year experience in Corporate Sales/Advertising/ Publication

PRINT PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

The Print Production Assistant will be directly involved in the scheduling, organization, supervision, monitoring and approval of the publication of the company's titles and projects, and assist the Print Production Supervisor in the performance of his/her duties and responsibilities.

- single, 20-31 years old, college graduate
- preferably with some pre-press experience and knowledge of printing processes
- computer literate, with knowledge of InDesign, Photoshop and other related applications
- punctual, organized and methodical
- knowledgeable in color and design theory

ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Qualifications:
- Graduate of any Engineering Course
- 2 to 3 years experience in building administration or related job
- 2 years management experience
- Exposure in administration services and budget management

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Qualifications:
- College graduate preferably with Accounting background
- At least 1 year experience in a similar job
- With knowledge of basic purchasing principles
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, report writing and filing skills

WEB CONTENT SPECIALIST

Will be responsible for maintaining content and development of assigned Websites/ blogs. The Web Content Specialist will provide support services that will include the following:

- Development and implement content, forms and templates, email, newsletters, RSS,and other interactive content
- Track and report usage statistics, using metrics to determine opportunities for improving and optimizing web services accordingly
- Assist the Web Manager with other division related concerns

Requirements:
- Male/Female, 21-30 years old
- Candidates must possess knowledge and/or experience with the following: Web content management using Wordpress, XHTML/DHTML/HTML, Javascript, CSS, PHP, RSS and other interactive media tools
- Highly motivated, organized, resourceful, creative, thrives under pressure and can work with minimal supervision
- In addition, the following skills and experience are highly desirable but not required: Knowledge of and experience with additional web development tools (Photoshop, Flash, Fireworks, Dreamweaver, etc.), Web server administration, domain administration, and search engine optimization (SEO)
- Applicants must be willing to work in Makati City.

hinge inquirer PUBLICATIONS

Interested applicants may email their resumés to hrd@hip.ph, apenillo@inquirer.com.ph or bring their resumé, two (2) 2x2 photos, Transcript of Records, and any valid I.D. to our office at Unit 330, Mile Long Building, Amorsolo corner Javier Streets, Makati City, from Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. | Tel. Nos.: 756-2284, 756-2034, 840-0196, 813-6848

JOB Market COMPACT *Inquire about the JobMarket package at 897-8808 loc 514.* JOB Market

Gant Diamond Corporation is one of the country's top 1000 corporations. It is engaged in the wholesale and retail of Fast Moving Consumer Goods. Poise to expand aggressively in the next few years; It is looking for young and dynamic individuals to be part of its team.

General Qualifications:
- Willing to work for long hours
- Willing to work on weekends and holidays
- Willing to be assigned to different branches
- Preferably from Marikina, Quezon City, and the CAMANAVA area.
- Can work effectively with a small team and with minimum supervision
- Must be dynamic and aggressive in meeting business targets
- Hardworking, fast-learner and can work well under pressure
- With pleasing personality
- Has good work ethics

Marketing Staff
Male/female 21-25 years old, must be a graduate of Retail/Marketing Management, Mass Communication or any related field from a reputable school, must have an excellent background in the field of marketing and sales, must have an excellent communication, presentation and negotiation skills, will conceptualize and execute marketing activities that would contribute to increasing the brand awareness and sales of the supermarket, will coordinate with suppliers and trade partners regarding promotions and co-marketing efforts, will conduct prospecting through cold calls and area rounds to acquire potential client (small and medium-sized retailers i.e. Sari-sari stores and restaurants)

Fresh Section Purchaser
Must have prior experience in the retail or supermarket business, male/female 26 years old and above, graduate of Hotel and Restaurant Management or any related course, has extensive supplier contacts, will purchase fresh produce (meat, chicken, fish, fruits and vegetables), will forecast purchase orders, in charge of refilling shelves and displays

Purchasing Assistant
Prior experience in the retail or supermarket business is an advantage, male/female 24 years old and above, will purchase Fast moving consumer goods (FMCG), will forecast purchase orders, in charge of refilling shelves/displays

Electronic Data Processor (EDP)
Graduate of any Computer related course, Preferably female aged 21-28, Experience in the Supermarket business is an advantage, in charge of receiving and encoding of the purchased orders, will troubleshoot point of sale system, maintains inventory database, records transfers, bad orders and rebates, in charge of cycle counts and inventory

Accounting Clerk
Preferably an Accounting graduate or any business related course with accounting background, Fresh graduates are accepted, Accounting responsibilities, Bookkeeping

Management Trainee
Graduate of Management or any related course, 22 years old up; open for fresh graduates, willing to be assigned to different departments, willing to undergo training for a certain period of time

Technical Maintenance Officer
Graduate of any computer related course, Knowledgeable in computer hardware and computer networking, with troubleshooting skills, preferably male aged 21-28

Human Resource Officer
Graduate of Psychology or any related course, preferably female aged 24-28, knowledgeable in compensation and performance appraisal and benefits

Freelance Researcher
Male/female, not more than 30 years of age, willing to conduct field research within the Metro Manila and nearby areas, must have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, background in research and survey methodologies

Interested applicants may submit their resumes to Parco Supermarket and Department Store- Quezon Avenue Branch
Or email your resumes at: parcosupermarket@gmail.com
Look for: Genevieve Ong / Ciara Santos
Telephone numbers: 374-2178 / Fax number: 374-7493

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- are physically fit,
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- are at least 21 but not older than 35 years of age,

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Send a letter of application to: THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Maria Montessori Children's School Foundation, Inc.
Madrid Street, Merville Park
Parañaque City 1700

or email it to **mmcsfi@i-manila.com.ph**

DO NOT send any other documents at this time. We will contact you if you are considered for hiring and may request additional documentation and information after the interview is done.

IAS
INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE SERVICES

IAS an airline subsidiary (**www.ias-global.com**) is searching for

RESERVATIONS & TICKETING AGENTS

Candidates must have the following qualifications:
- Good written and oral English communication skills.
- Willing to work flexible hours and shifts
- Fast learner, confident in making decisions, team player.

Recent graduates with a good academic record, or a BS Tourism course will be a plus.

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How to contact us:
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(Tel. 02-913-1357)
We will contact you after we have studied your Resumé
By Fax: 02 9118075
By Email: lyn@amezcuawellness.com
For further inquiries text/call 0917 8037659

IAS
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IAS an airline subsidiary is searching for

STAFF ACCOUNTANTS

Candidate must have the following qualifications:
- Accounting graduate
- Male or female
- Good communication skills
- Preferably with Airline Background
- Responsible, trustworthy and a fast learner
- Experience in admin or credit control is a plus

Candidate may send resumé via e-mail to **hire@iasasia.com** or mail to:

IASA, INC.
25th Floor, RCBC Plaza Tower 1,
6819 Ayala cor Buendia Avenue, Makati

WANTED IMMEDIATELY

SECRETARY

An international development organization has an immediate need for a SECRETARY who will provide the entire range of secretarial and administrative support to one of its technical offices. The incumbent will type/draft cables, letters, memos, faxes, and other technical documents; prepare handouts and power point presentations; handle telephone calls as appropriate. He/She will receive, send out, and track required letters and other documents; perform liaison functions within the organization, with Philippine Government counterparts, contractors, and other private sector representatives. The incumbent will also asist the team in coordination of meetings and arrangement of logistics; handle the local and international travel requirements of the members of the team; maintain and update the office's files; will act as file custodian; and, will perform other duties as may be required. Minimum educational requirement is completion of secondary education. Completion of secretarial course, business school, or college, including typing, office practice, computer course is highly desirable. At least two (2) years of progessively rersponsible secretarial or clerical experience is required with one-(1) year of this experience form donor agencies, private sector, or government organizations. Excellent command of English (both written and oral); level II typing ability (40 wpm); proficiency in the use of computers (Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, Powerpoint, e-mail, internet, etc.) including basic work operations like printer set-up, files search, virus scanning, etc., are essential.

Competitive salary (including mid-year and year-end bonuses), health and life insurance and a retirement plan are offered.

Interested persons should send their application letter and comprehensive resumé, **not later than March 30, 2007**, to:

Human Resources Division
P.O. Box EA 423
1000 Ermita, Manila

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Master	from US$5,115.-	6 mos. Contract
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Electrician	from US$3,019.-	10 mos. Contract
C/Cook	from US$1,378.- to US$1,486.-	10 mos. Contract
Ck/B (AB/Ck)	from US$1,067.-	10 mos. Contract
Bosun/Fitter	from US$1,105.- to US$1,213.-	10 mos. Contract
K/AB	from US$1,004.-	10 mos. Contract
AB/Oiler	from US$903.-	10 mos. Contract
OS/Wiper	from US$680.-	10 mos. Contract

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e-mail: recruitment@crewserve.com.ph
POEA Lic. 250-SB-061604-R

Galant Maritime Services, Inc.
1101 Ermita Center Building
1350 Roxas Boulevard,
Ermita, Manila
PIC: C/M Chito Mendoza
e-mail: recruitment_galant@marlow.com.ph
Tel. # 525-6092; 526-6888 loc 115
POEA Lic. 108-SB-091603-R

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> **Dentists** - not more than 30 years old, Female, with good team work attitude and personable

> **Bookkeeping Clerk** - Accounting Graduate, female, not more than 26 years old

> **Secretary/Receptionists** - graduate of any (4) years course with pleasing personality, willing to be assigned in any SM branches and not more than 26 years old

Pls. apply for **SM Metro Manila Clinics:**
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Tel # 7356594/97
Cell # 09193822681

HAPPY TEETH DENTAL CENTER & SPA
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Tel. # 299-0332 Cell # 0919-524-2932
email: happyteeth_dvodentalcenter@yahoo.com
or Email Add: pandora@itextron.com

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Batasan Pambansa Complex., Constitution Hills
Quezon City
Tel. No. 931-8101 to 07
http://www.dswd.gov.ph

VACANCY

Department of Social Welfare and Development – Legal Service has a vacant **Legal Officer V**, SG-24, with item no. OSEC-DSWDB-LEGO5-2-2006 with the following minimum qualification standards:

Education	: Bachelor of Laws
Experience	: 2 years in position/s involving management and supervision
Training	: 8 hours of training in management and supervision
Eligibility	: RA 1080 (Lawyer)

Other Requirements:
1. Member of the Bar
2. At least 2 years experience in litigation
3. Experience in handling land registration cases
4. Willing to travel extensively across the country

Interested applicants may submit their resumé and Certification of Admission to the Bar to the Legal Service, DSWD, Constitution Hills, Batasan Complex, Quezon City on or before 30 March 2007.

(Sgd.) MARIE ANGELA S. GOPALAN
Director, Human Resource Management and Development Service

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

SALES ENGINEER

- BSEE Graduate
- Female, not more than 35 years old
- With pleasing personality
- Must have at least 1 year experience in office/sales work
- Must be dynamic and reliable

Interested applicants may bring their comprehensive resumé with I.D. photo to:

VIRAGO INTERNATIONAL, INC.
Unit 5B, 8101 Pearl Plaza, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

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The country's most widely read and circulated newspaper is in need of:

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DESK EDITOR
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- Must have 3 years experience in newspaper Journalism
- With at least 1 year experience in editing and designing/layouting pages

SYSTEMS ANALYST / PROGRAMMER
QUALIFICATIONS:
- College degree holder in Computer Science or Computer Engineering with a business background
- 1 to 2 years experience as systems analyst / programmer
- Must have work experience in Powerbuilder, MS SQL 2000, Sybase SQL or other Relational Database Management System. Knowledge in Visual Basic, VB Scripting, Perl Scripting is an advantage.
- Can work with minimal supervision

SERVICE ENGINEER
QUALIFICATIONS:
- Graduate of Computer Engineering / ECE
- 6 months to one year experience on this job
- Knowledge of computer operations systems like Windows XP and Windows 2000/ MAC OS X, desktop applications like MS Office, Open Office, Email Client, Adobe products, Troubleshooting Skills, Interpersonal & Communication Skills.
- Knowledge in network

HR CLERK
QUALIFICATIONS:
- College graduate preferably major in Psychology or Behavioral Science
- With at least 6 months experience in recruitment or benefits process
- Service-oriented and can work in minimum supervision

DRIVER
QUALIFICATIONS:
- High School graduate
- Holder of a Professional Driver's License
- 1-2 years experience in collection work or similar field
- Familiar with roads, districts, areas
- Knowledge of basic mechanical repairs and traffic rules and regulations

GRAPHICS ARTIST
QUALIFICATIONS:
- College graduate preferably Fine Arts
- 1 year experience as Graphics Designer
- Knowledge of Photoshop, Adobe InDesign
- Skilled in manual and computer based illustration, page design and artwork

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Qualifications:
- College graduate preferably in English, Mass Communications or Journalism
- Excellent skills in English grammar, proofreading, layouting, encoding
- Knowledge in MS Word, Pagemaker

Send your application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

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THE HR MANAGEMENT SERVICES HEAD
Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc.
Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo)
Corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City
E-mail: recruitment@inquirer.com.ph

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We are a local service provider of various multinational companies and urgently need young and dynamic people for our present projects:

RECRUITMENT SUPERVISORS
1 Recruitment Supervisor for each work site
Work sites: Makati, Alabang, Ortigas, Manila, Quezon City - Commonwealth
- College graduate preferably Psychology Major;
- 25 to 35 years old preferably female;
- With substantial experience in recruitment
- Good communication skills, computer literate and willing to render overtime

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
- M/ F, College graduate: 22 – 30 years old;
- Good communication skills, trustworthy and results oriented;
- At least 1 year substantial experience in the field of sales and marketing and;
- Willing to work long hours

ACCOUNTING CLERKS
- College graduate of any business course preferably Accounting;
- Female, 22 – 30 years old;
- At least (1) year substantial experience in accounting and;
- Computer literate and can render overtime if necessary

Please personally submit your resume and other credentials to:
Rm. 309, VI-LA Bldg., Edsa Cubao, Quezon City near Farmers Plaza
or email to **basic_affiliatefsicinc@yahoo.com / jeselynmae@yahoo.com**
or fax to 4214214/ 4394077 and attention to Jeselyn or Ella.

Fresh Graduates are welcome to apply for our other job openings!

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Excellent opportunity for entry level or experienced **POLYSOMNOGRAPHER** or Sleep Technician in our state-of-the-art Scoring Center, scoring overnight PSGs and identifying EEG abnormalities, cardiac arrhythmias, and respiratory events according to sleep lab protocols. Prefer computer literate, excellent English communication skills <u>and</u> experience as a sleep tech, but other related fields will be considered. We will train accepted candidates. Work at night with starting salary of P20,000 per month. Send resumé to jubileescoring@gmail.com.

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Tel: 8578800 **Fax:** 8578881

Our Philippine Reservations Center is looking for:

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES / RESERVATION SALES AGENTS

(English, Spanish, Korean, Arabic, or Japanese*)

Job summary

- Represents the Company by coordinating all aspects of Priority Club Programs and serves as liaison between the guest and hotels in order to maintain member satisfaction
- Delivers Individualized Customer Experiences by focusing on finding hotel accommodations that will best fit our guests needs

Requirements

- Must be a Bachelor/College degree holder
- Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills with one of the following languages: English, Spanish, Korean, Arabic, or Japanese*
- Customer service and/or sales experience an advantage
- Education and experience in the hospitality or IT industry an advantage
- Must be willing to work on a rotating shift
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply

* *Japanese-speaking CSR's must be native speakers and will be working on day shift*

EMPLOYMENT SUPERVISOR

Job summary

- Responsible for planning, developing and implementing recruitment and sourcing activities
- Establishes and maintains external relationships with education institutions, government and recruitment agencies, and other possible recruitment sources
- Provides support to Recruitment by managing some recruitment processes

Requirements

- Candidate must possess a Bachelor's/College Degree in Human Resources, Marketing, or Management
- Has 5 years work experience in doing recruitment functions, 2 years of which in a supervisory level capacity, call center experience is an advantage
- Excellent organizational, project-management, decision-making, and interpersonal skills
- Has strong sourcing/marketing/branding experience

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PROJECT BASED
20 Licensed Civil Engineers

- With or without experience
- Computer literate
- Good in oral & written communication
- Focused, hardworking, reliable, resourceful and flexible
- With good interpersonal skills and analytical mind

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY APPLY PERSONALLY AT:

Program Management Group
MWSS Compound, 2nd Floor-Engineering Bldg.,
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City
Look for Rhoda Quinsaat
Tel. No. DL – 4336978 or 9205521 loc. 3610

Application period is from March 19 to March 31, 2007

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.
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McKinsey & Company is a global consulting firm advising the top management of leading companies and institutions on issues of strategy, organization, operations, and technology. We have more than 80 offices worldwide including 17 locations in Asia-Pacific.

We are seeking **finance professionals** to join our **regional shared services centre** in Manila for the following 3 key positions –

- **Manager, Accounts Payable and Expense Reporting**
- **Manager, Regional Payroll**
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Leading a team of more than 7 staff, the incumbent will have overall responsibilities for maintaining high service level of efficiency and effectiveness for the above functions. Your team will be initially servicing the Asia Pacific locations. You will ensure that firm accounting requirements are met and proper effective internal controls are in place. You will also engage the operations and spearhead continuous improvements in systems and controls for the team.

Ideally you are a CPA with at least 5 to 7 years relevant experience. Leadership experience in a shared services environment will be preferred. You are fluent in English and a highly motivated individual. A versatile team player who is able to work in a multi-cultural environment, comfortable dealing with all levels of staff across borders. Willingness and ability to be "hands-on" is important. Knowledge of Oracle is also an added advantage.

We offer a highly competitive compensation and benefits package in line with experience and qualifications.

To apply: Please forward a detailed resumé with current and expected salary in strict confidence by e-mail to mssc_recruit@mckinsey.com on or before April 30, 2007 with the subject "MSSC Manager". Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

McKinsey&Company

ONE OF THE LEADING FIRMS IN THE INDUSTRY

urgently needs:

Field Auditors

- Male; 21-27 years old
- Preferably CPA, with experience in internal or external auditing
- With above average oral and written communication skills
- Willing to travel

Head Office Stationed Auditors

- Female; 21-25 years old
- BS in Accountancy, preferably a CPA
- With experience in pre-audit/post-audit of payroll and disbursements

Interested parties are requested to apply personally from Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 1:00 pm., together with their comprehensive resumé, transcript of records and 2x2 picture to: **Human Resources Department 25th Floor KP Tower, C.M. Recto Ave. cor Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila**

net pacific, inc., a stable, aggressive and fast growing company now on it's 10th year of operations, one of the top *Structured Cabling* and *Electrical Contractor* in the office fit-out industry, is in need of:

Senior Electrical Engineer

- REE required
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- between 25 to 35 years old

Electrical Engineer

- male, between 20 to 30 years old
- electrical engineering graduate from a reputable school

Office Assistant/Secretary

- at least 1 year experience in administrative paper work
- female, between 20 to 28 years old

Cad operator

- willing to be assigned at project site

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We offer a competitive compensation package commensurate to qualifications. Due to the urgency of our requirements, interested applicants are invited to hand carry their comprehensive resume to:

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OR E-MAIL APPLICATION TO:
netpacific@pldtdsl.net

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www.netpacific.net

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JOB OFFER

Now accepting applications for full-time, Mon-Sat, positions: and part-time, Mon-Sun, positions:

Apply at: Guiyangco Building, T. Claudio Street, Morong, Rizal. Positions are for;

1) **Medical Abstractors / Transcriptionists**
2) **Manager** - Working supervisor in charge of daily operations and employee training, serving as a liaison between USA and Philippines operations.

Candidates must be fluent in English and must be able to type at least 60 wpm. Microsoft Word proficiency or concurrent enrollment in Microsoft Word certification courses is required. Certificate of completion might be necessary; Medical terminology knowledge helpful. Medical or legal professionals, college graduates or graduating college students preferred, with backgrounds in English, Journalism or health-related fields.

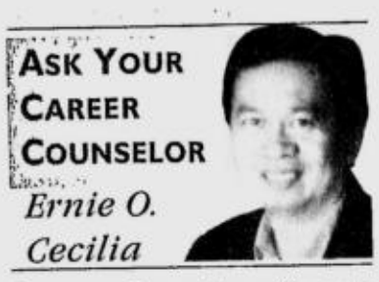
For job consideration, resumé and salary history must be submitted in person at the Renaissance School of Science and Technology, Sitio Paglabas, Morong, Rizal.

For information contact Candy or Edna at 691-6065, 691-6224 Cell # 0910-847-3281 or 0920-2870610. Only completed applications will be considered for job interviews.

Successful candidates will undergo training with pay from 5/21/07 to 6/1/07 by a USA representative.

email: **chatty_214@yahoo.com**

'I work hard but never get promoted'



ASK YOUR CAREER COUNSELOR

Ernie O. Cecilia

I HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR five years now in a large multinational, had a good performance appraisal these past three years, and yet have not been promoted. I think my boss does not notice the good work I am doing. He has in fact promoted two employees less senior than me, and even hired from the outside to fill in a position that I feel I was qualified for.

What should I do to get promoted? Shall I move to another department or to another company?

Bypassed

This is a common complaint from employees. Of course, it is normal to expect a promotion after working for some time. In reality, not everybody gets promoted.

On the other hand, the people who get promoted are not necessarily those who are best qualified—usually, they are those who know best how to get promoted. In the same manner, the people who get hired for a job, or get elected, are not necessarily the best qualified, but those who know best how to get hired or elected.

What is promotion?

More often, a promotion is a movement to another position that has more responsibilities, higher stature, and usually more pay. In some companies, people get promoted after they perform well in their present jobs. Promoted employees therefore think, rightly or wrongly, that promotion is a reward for good performance.

In many other great companies, promotion is not a reward. It is a carefully thought out management decision to fill up a position. The choices are to promote somebody from within or to hire from outside. It is usually good to fill in vacant positions from employees in lower ranks and positions to show upward career mobility. This also encourages employees to work hard and aspire for higher positions in the organization.

Some companies structure their organization in a way that an employee who performs well can get "promoted" and still do the same job. This is really "upgrading" the position of an employee. The nature of the job does not change but the employee is given a new position title and an increase in pay—e.g., from sales representative to senior sales representative.

Whether you call it promotion or upgrading, employees still feel promoted in this manner.

Promotion criteria

Usually, there are criteria for promotion. Length of stay in a particular position is hardly one of those. Generally, employees think that good performance is a basis for promotion. Of course, bosses look at present performance before they promote people. They do this in order to find clues on the person's capability to perform a more responsible job that he hasn't tried. Past performance can often predict future performance. More importantly, they look at how an employee performs, his style of doing things, how he plans and achieves his goals, and how he relates with others in and outside the organization.

To put it bluntly, it is not the duty of a boss to promote employees who are in the same position for the longest time. It appears that it is the duty of the employee to convince his boss that he is ready to move up.

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

It is common for us to hear our bosses say, "Just do your job well and we will take care of your career."

Like you, many employees believe this to be Bible truth. I usually give a slightly different advice—"Do your job well and make sure you get noticed."

Performance does not speak for itself. If you want to get promoted, make sure that your boss notices your good performance. Bosses are so busy with so many things, including how they themselves can get promoted. Your performance is important to him, but your career is probably the least of his worries. To be sure, he worries more about his career than yours.

Know your boss better, talk to him about your work, and let him know how you are doing, especially each time you do a great job. Write a report of your achievement, keep a file, and show your file to your boss during your performance appraisal. That way, your boss will be reminded of the great job you did.

Make your boss promote you

Bosses are usually looking at their people to find high potentials or high flyers. These are talents who can be promoted to the top or higher rung of the organizational ladder. In many companies who have succession planning systems, bosses are required to rate their employees' performance and potential. They keep an eye on employees with potential, train them, assign them to more challenging jobs, and promote them to more responsible positions. They do this more to ensure long-term continuity of management within the organization than because they have a big heart.

If you have what it takes to be a manager, show your talent in every possible occasion. You can get noticed during staff meetings by contributing the best ideas or by volunteering to do the most difficult jobs, or by helping your boss to do a part of his work. (Believe me, this worked for me.)

Working to eke out a great performance is hard enough, getting noticed in a way that you don't seem obnoxious is even harder. In fact, I think it is an art that people should learn if they want to get promoted.

In reality, bosses only make the scorecard—you still do everything to score. Work hard at scoring every time you do a job, but make sure that your great performance gets into the scorecard of your boss.

Responsibility

You should also remember that promotion carries with it a responsibility to perform more. Much is expected from those to whom much is given.

When you aim for a promotion, make sure that you are prepared to learn all it takes to make great contributions. When you fail to perform after a promotion, it could be your last promotion. This is what Dr. Peter calls being "promoted to one's incompetence."

Reaching for the top is not for everybody. I know many people at the top who are not happy. But you can always want, work for and earn a more challenging and rewarding career. Nothing will be handed to you in a silver platter. As you go higher, it becomes more competitive.But if you just want simple happiness, contentment and peace of mind, forget the itch to get promoted. Just understand the wonderful interdependence of things and jobs at work, seek the opportunity to make a contribution to your organization, and exercise your skills fully every time you have the chance. When you do all these, who knows?—you might even get promoted.

(Ernie Cecilia is the president and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center, a human resource consulting firm.)

Eight things to do if you want a promotion

- Do your work well; perform like there's no tomorrow
- Talk to your boss about your work and make him notice your good performance
- Volunteer to do things beyond the scope of your job—if you just do your job, perhaps you will be the best person for that job alone; show that you can also be good at other jobs
- Look beyond today; scout for positions you want to occupy in the future and find out from incumbents what they do and what skills are needed to do the job
- Have a plan to learn new skills, especially those needed by jobs you can do in the future
- Enhance your personality; if you are a production worker and wants to be a production manager in the future, start thinking like a manager, contribute ideas during staff meetings, volunteer to do committee or ad hoc jobs, and get close to managers
- Even as you do these things, don't forget to keep your head in the clouds but your feet planted on the ground; think of what could be tomorrow, but also think of what really are today

Gospel: Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'

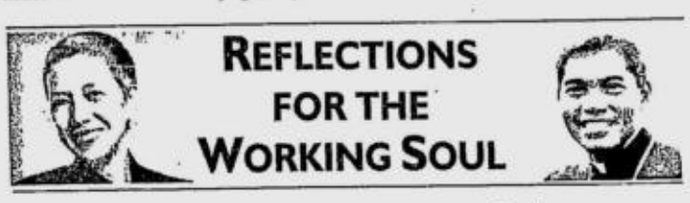
A good manager

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB, DD

IN THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND WORK, A GOOD MANAGER IS essential. Most successful companies would attribute their success largely to good management which has the vital task of skillfully combining all the elements that would contribute to the fruitfulness of the business enterprise. Good management would specially focus on the positive aspects of all kinds of resources and would not waste time and energy on those considered as "dead" or "lost" ones, whether material, personnel or financial. In the context of today's Gospel, a good manager would not behave like the merciful father who still spent much for a lavish banquet for his prodigal son who was as good as "dead" and "lost"; he could not afford to show mercy for any "nonperforming asset."

Yet, it seems that Jesus is teaching us that in the divine logic, there is gain and rejoicing even in situations and cases where for the business mind there would clearly be mere liabilities. It is therefore important for managers in business and in the workplace to try to discover the hidden but real treasure of mercy and forgiveness in dealing especially with persons (workers or business associates) who might pose a real threat to the success of the enterprise.

The merciful and forgiving attitude taught by Jesus could inspire a decision-maker to work out a win-win solution to problematic situations even in the workplace and business which could benefit not only the company but also the other parties involved. A good manager is one who would make everyone rejoice not so much in gaining great profits as much as in making the presence of merciful and loving Jesus felt in their midst. *(E-mail the author at mfvg@skyinet.net)*



REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL

Greedy or grateful?

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

ARE YOU BEING CONSUMED BY ENVY OR JEALOUSY TOWARDS A COworker? Watch it. When you're on "Grrrr." mode, ready to wage war against the world, hide your fangs and retract your claws. You could be suffering from plain old simple Grrrreed. You could be so greedy you forget to be grateful. When sales manager Arthur's right-hand man Joey suddenly resigned, he grudgingly bore the burden the event dumped on his lap. Arthur took in a new assistant but he wasn't as good as Joey who, meanwhile, had gone abroad "seeking greener pastures." Three years later Joey returned, applying for any position in sales. To Arthur's dismay, the company president who knew Joey's capabilities happily took him back. Arthur nearly blew his top, seething with envy and jealousy. To his mind, Joey was a selfish and unfaithful employee who was only after his own interests but not the company's—this he proved when he unceremoniously resigned three years back. So why welcome him now—"*Ano siya, sinuswerte*?"

Arthur didn't see that all that time Joey was out he was so trusted by the president that he was given all the opportunities to grow: he was sent abroad yearly for sales seminars, his salary was periodically raised, the company gave him a housing loan without a sweat, he got everything he asked for since his inputs were really appreciated. Like the older brother in today's Gospel who got angry over a fattened calf his father slaughtered for his brother's return, Arthur had taken his blessings for granted so that he became greedy, and now he wouldn't admit it but he felt Joey's return was a threat to his contentment. Had he been truly grateful he would welcome Joey just as happily, reinforcing his alliance with the president and gaining for himself another competent assistant.*(E-mail the author at teresa_de_manila@yahoo.com)*

Learning the art of true clout at work

By Aya V. Jallorina
Contributor

I READ THE STORY OF ONE OF the most powerful men in the US. His name is Harold W. McGraw Jr., chairman of the board for a well-known publishing company, McGraw-Hill. There were a number of reasons to feel Harold was a powerful guy. For one, his name was on the 50-storey behemoth of a building. He had all the trappings of authority and status accorded to corporate fat cats. His office on the top floor was huge, ornately paneled with dark wood and, most impressive of all for a workplace in midtown Manhattan, extremely quiet. He had his own elevator to the executive floor and spare apartment as well. When he retired, his successor inherited these perks. But Harold's successor never seemed to carry the same weight with people as Harold did. His power was immense, yet it was not something that he demanded because he was chairman of the board. His styles were simple, which was exactly the opposite of what one expected from an executive of his stature. He was every inch a humble man. He could be seen getting off the elevator (not the private one but the one all employees used) toting his belongings in a plastic bag rather than in an important looking attaché case. He was also a master of personal touch. If you did him a favor no matter how small, he'd write a little "Thank-you" note in odd but distinctive green ink. And he seemed to remember the name of every person he met. His employees in fact called him by his first name—just Harold, not "sir" not "boss."

What these things have to do with power is obvious: Because he schmoozed with regular people and made them feel important, it is not uncommon to hear employees say things like, "I'd do anything for Harold." If that's not power, I don't know what it is.

Indeed, that is exactly what power is—exercising "effortless" authority.

Employees follow orders and give you respect not because you are the boss and their employment security depends largely on your recommendations, but because they genuinely like you. It is more than exerting influence in order to be in command, which is what we usually associate with when we say one is powerful. When he has a bigger office, is wearing the trendiest power suit or is driving the hottest car, he appears to be powerful. Of course, these physical manifestations really reflect a certain amount of power one has, but true power is not at all in these material goods. Likewise, true power is not about asserting one's self over others because they are your subordinates (I call this arrogance), or forcing people to do things they'd rather not, again because you have the mandate to do so (I call this oppression). Power through domination is inevitably short-lived, because these can make people resentful. Instead, true authority comes from working with people and not against them.

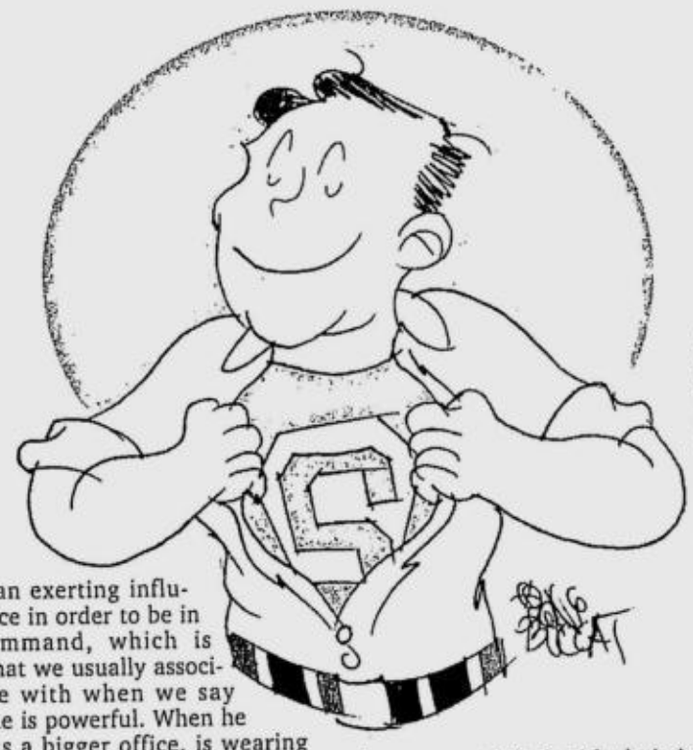


ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

To be truly powerful at work, allow people the opportunity to broker their individual power. Figure out how both sides of an issue can prevail. Having a sense of individual power, according to freedom lovers who were behind America's Declaration of Independence, is at the core of the people's inalienable right to happiness.

Allowing employees to have power of their own tends to motivate them to be more productive. A research released by Harvard University says workers who have a sense of control over what they contribute to the enterprise tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and produces more output. "If you have a sense of power, going to wok is a joyful prospect instead of a depressing one. You feel your job is exhilarating rather than just an onerous set of tasks," said Peter Wylie, author of the book, "Problem Employees: How To Improve Their Performance."

On the other hand, lack of power can be stressful. When one struggles with a difficult boss for instance, he may feel angry, frustrated and helpless. This can lead to stress which can result to physical illness. Hence, to have true clout at work, the question becomes this: How can one exercise authority without appearing manipulative?

Respect people. It is a vital virtue to respect others. If you respect people, you'll listen to them more. If you don't respect them, they'll sense it and will stop talking to you, which is the first way in which you lose power with them. What's more, listening to people is a good way to check Napoleon-like feelings of arrogance and omnipotence, which are the negative sides of power.

Behave in a way that's neither provocative nor subservient. If you have a superior at work who bullies, steals your ideas or fails to bat for his staff, it is important to stand up to what your beliefs are and disagree without being disagreeable. Make sure he knows you are open to his point of view. Say, "I don't agree with you on that, but tell me more of what you're thinking."

See it his way. Shrewd power players know what the boss is after and help him try to get it. Avoid feeling conflict over the direction of your work by making your own goals dovetail with his. If you're at odds with what you superior needs, it can make you sullen and resentful which gets you less of what you want.

Always be direct about your needs. If you need a break from work because you need to take a class, just say it and be sincere about your goals. Don't play games, don't concoct alibis or make unauthorized disappearances from work. Say, "I want to finish my master's degree. This would mean I need two days off from work each week. I'm prepared to make up the time. Can we work this out?"

Defy the dictum of conventional office politics. Never write off an old dog because his star no longer shines or is no longer hip or not as quick a the others. Most old dogs (read: veteran employees) are full of wisdom and well-versed with the workings of the place and the background of the boss. Learn from them.

Adapt a martial-arts approach; turn obstacles into advantages. For instance, if your boss' leadership style hinders you from gaining responsibility, understand that he's nervous about "screw ups" and tap into that with a kind of reverse psychology. Instead of badgering him, offer to show him drafts of all reports. Then suggest work collaboration with him.

Get smart. The phrase "knowledge is power" is cliché, but did you notice that smart people often have a lot of influence even when they don't have a lot of authority? People keep an open ear to them and put stock in what they have to say. Smart advice: Be outspoken when you know a lot about a subject, but keep your mouth shut when you don't. That way, you'll always sound informed and never stupid. *(Feedback at legalese ava@yahoo.com)*

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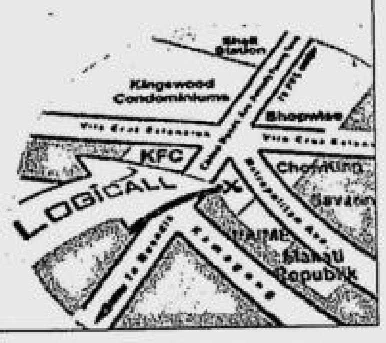

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Industrial front calmer in January 2007

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY ARTURO D. BRION today said that 2007 began with a calmer industrial front with only one strike occurring in the country last month as compared to two work stoppages recorded during the same period in 2006.

Citing a report from the National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB), Brion said that the strike last January occurred in Region 4-A (Calabarzon) involving 54 workers of the country's largest manufacturer and exporter of automotive radiators, the Radphil Corporation in Canlubang, Laguna.

The rest of the country remained strike-free, the DOLE chief said adding that the NCMB is exhausting all efforts to settle the strike at Radphil to enable the firm get back on its feet and resume full production at the soonest time possible.

Brion said that the calmer industrial front signals a better environment for investments and business expansion in the Philippines this year.

He said that the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and its labor relations arm consisting of the NCMB, Bureau of Labor Relations, and the National Labor Relations Commission have set their sights on sustaining the relatively peaceful relations between labor and management to ensure a favorable environment for investments in 2007.

He said that measures have been set in place to settle plant-level disputes and prevent strikes and lockouts in anticipation of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) that would expire this year.

The labor and employment secretary said that the conduct of labor and management education shall be intensified to foster plant-level understanding and cooperation between workers and employers.

He added that conciliation and mediation efforts, including the conduct of administrative intervention for dispute avoidance (AIDA), shall also be strengthened to further reduce if not eliminate strikes by settling plant level disputes before they could escalate into strikes and lockouts.

Citing an NCMB report, Brion noted that there was a 10% increase in the number of notices of strikes and lockouts filed with the Board from 30 in January 2006 to 33 in the same period this year.

He said that more notices of strikes and lockouts are expected to be filed with NCMB this year considering that 2007 is a CBA year. About 413 CBAs nationwide are expected to expire in the next 10 months.

The NCMB, however, is prepared to settle the notices before they materialize into strikes and lockouts, Brion said.

3RD METRO MANILA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INDUSTRIES (NCR) JOINT INDUCTION

The joint induction of the newly elected board of directors and officers of Metro Manila Chamber of Commerce for 2007 was officiated by Samie C. Lim, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries (PCCI) on March 8 at Heritage Ballroom, Heritage Hotel, Manila. Shown are the Quezon City Chamber of Commerce and Industries (QCCCI) newly elected officers and directors (standing from left) executive director Lorna Asuncion, committee chair Fidel Marcelo, corporate secretary Elma Lagamson, newly elected president Carmina Desales, PCCI president Samie C. Lim, QCCCI past president and chair/CEO Carl Balita, 1st vice president Rafael S. Chico and committee chair Eduardo Madrid. Other newly elected officers are 2nd vice president Dr. Hernan Delizo, directors Cecille Patricio, Catherine de Mendoza, Teddy Valerio, lawyer Fidel Escario, Benjamin T. Co, Bonnie B. Gamboa, Eprhaim G. Vasquez, Ronald Yap, Arthur Palileo, Carolina de la Costa, Dr. Jim Sanchez and committee chair Juls Cabanero.

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DAY 2
- Increasing Your Convincing Power
- The Glamour Words
- Rapport Building Techniques
- Psychological Triggers
- Persuasive Presentation
- Body Language

DAY 3
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- General Ways of Handling Objections
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Dinsmor Magnets

NREA inaugural meeting

THE NATIONAL REAL Estate Association, Inc. (NREA) had its inaugural meeting on Feb. 22 at Makati Sports Club in Salcedo Village, Makati City.

According to NREA vice president Marissa del Mar, chairlady of the inaugural committee, the chairmen and chairladies of the NREA working committees for 2007 will be installed by Architect Nestor S. Mangio, newly appointed chairman of Clark International Airport Corp.

During the affair, Chair Aglipay, former director general of Philippine National Police, also inducted NREA honorary member by association founder and chairman Jose V. Manalad.

Interested parties may call the NREA Secretariat at 913-4463 and 912-3492.

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor and Employment
POEA Building, Ortigas Avenue cor EDSA, Mandaluyong 1501
Website: www.poea.gov.ph E-mail: info@poea.gov.ph
Hotlines: 722-1144, 722-1155

ISO 9001:2000

EPS-KOREAN LANGUAGE TEST (KLT) REGISTRATION / ADMINISTRATION

What : 5th EPS KOREAN LANGUAGE TEST (KLT)
Test Date : May 6, 2007 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
(Applicants must be in their respective test rooms at 1:00 PM)
Test Venues : To be announced later
Registration Period : April 2,3, 10-20, 2007

Registration Venues :
1. For Luzon – Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC) North Avenue corner Agham Road Diliman, Quezon City (In front of Philippine Veterans Hospital)
2. For Visayas – POEA Regional Center for Visayas Mezzanine Floor, LDM Bldg M.J. Cuenco Avenue cor. Legaspi St., Cebu City
3. For Mindanao – POEA Regional Center for Mindanao 2nd Floor, AMYA II Bldg. Quimpo Blvd. cor. Tulip Drive Ecoland, Davao City

Quota 10,000
9,000 – Male
1,000 – Female

Requirements for Registration:
1. Passport or 2 valid IDs
2. 2x2 pictures on red background with nametags, 2 pcs.
3. Registration with the POEA
4. Not more than 38 years old (born not earlier than 1969)
5. EPS KLT fee of US$30, in peso equivalent

Who may register for the 5th EPS KLT?
1. All EPS Korea applicants registered with the POEA covering the period September 2006 up to the present.
2. All EPS Korea applicants who have not yet registered with the POEA but who are WILLING and READY to take the 5th EPS KLT may be simultaneously registered, provided they comply with all the requirements for POEA EPS and EPS KLT registrations. Provided further, that old registrants shall have priority in the quota.

Test coverage / domains:

Listening : 25 questions – 100 score – 40 minutes
Reading : 25 questions – 100 score – 50 minutes
Total : 50 questions – 200 score – 90 minutes

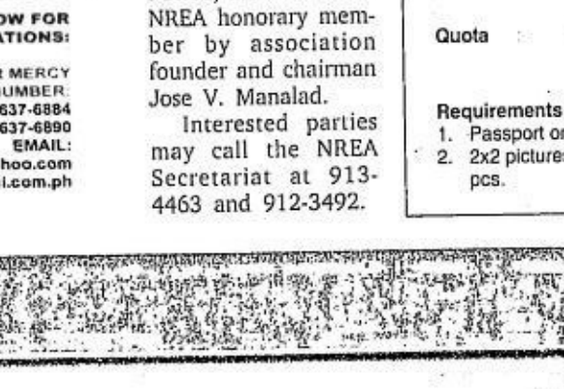
In order to pass, the applicant must get at least 40 points in each domain, and an overall score of at least 120 points for the two tests.

Release of EPS KLT results: May 25, 2007
Announcement / Posting : http://www.poea.gov.ph
http://www.glokorean.org

APPROVED FOR POSTING AND PUBLICATION:

ROSALINDA DIMAPILIS-BALDOZ
Administrator

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



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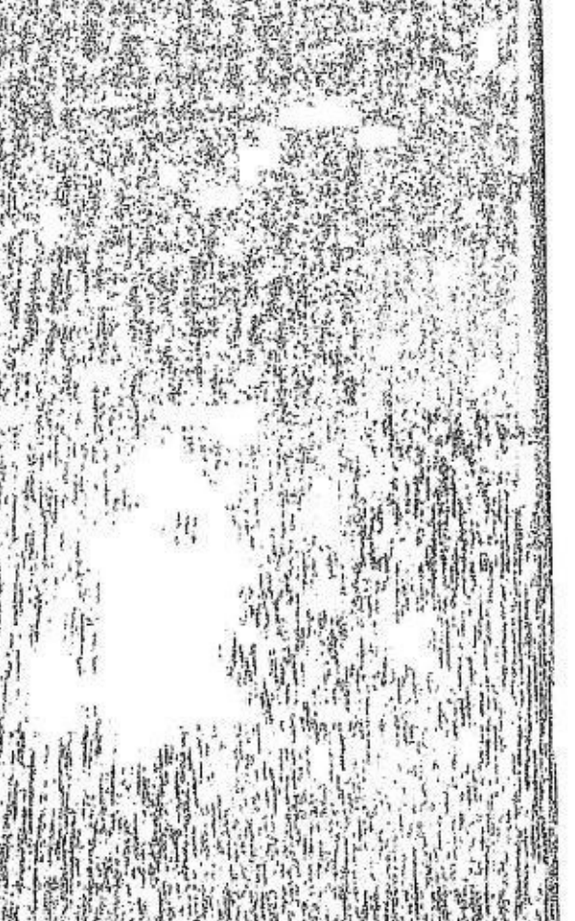

"Children are at the heart of everything we do"

Plan Philippines (also known as **Plan**) is an International humanitarian child-centred development organisation without religious, political, or governmental affiliation. Child sponsorship is the basic foundation of the organisation. **Plan** seeks to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children, their families and communities in developing countries such as Philippines. The organisation operates worldwide in 48 developing countries and has been in the Philippines since 1961.

We are currently looking for highly competent and committed persons for the following vacant position:

PROJECT OFFICERS (5)

Job Function: Organises and/or strengthens barangay children's associations, community-based organizations, and locally-mandated bodies; facilitates and manages participatory assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of child-centred community development (CCCD) projects and sponsorship communications at the barangay level in close collaboration with various partners.

Major Responsibilities:
- Organizes and/or strengthens community-based organisations to ensure ownership and sustainability of child-centred community development processes
- Strengthens community groups to manage child-centred community development projects
- Facilitates implementation of child-centred programs and projects in the assigned barangays
- Establishes and/or maintains strategic linkages, partnerships, network with partner organizations
- Manages and facilitates sponsorship communications in the assigned area

Qualifications and Requirements
- Graduate of Social Work, Social Science, Community Development and other related courses
- 3 years solid experience in development work preferably in an International NGO setting
- Able to understand/speak the local dialect in Southern Leyte
- Good command of oral and written communication (both English and local dialect)
- Proficient in the use of computer applications (min. Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, Outlook)
- Strong knowledge and skills in CCCD, community organising and participatory community development processes, facilitating communities to manage their own child-centred projects
- In depth understanding of UNCRC, Child 21, other child-related laws and ordinances and the Local Government Code (RA 7160)
- Committed to community work and willing to stay 100% of the time in the assigned barangays
- Willing to be assigned in any of the barangays of San Ricardo, Pintuyan, San Francisco, Liloan and Libagon

Women are encouraged to apply. Interested applicants are requested to submit to the address below letter of application with two references (not relatives), their address and contact numbers and comprehensive resume in hard copy not later than 21 March 2007. Only short listed applicants will be notified. Previous applicants need not apply.

Mr. Rodel C. Bontuyan
Programme Unit Manager
Plan Philippines
Southern Leyte Programme Unit
Dagohoy Street, Zone 1
Sogod, Southern Leyte 6606

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Interested applicants are advised to send their cv's via email to:
fvflorendo@hrnetworkph.bayandsl.ph
website: www.hrnetworkph.com

The AECOM Growth with Equity in Mindanao (AECOM-GEM) consortium, which is an integrated team of leading U.S. and Philippine development organizations, is assembling a high-caliber team to conduct programs that will improve the quality of life and prospects for peace in Mindanao. We value highly participatory development and emphasize the engagement of local staff in their communities and regions. For upcoming work that we are preparing for USAID, AECOM-GEM is seeking senior, mid, and junior-level professionals in multiple disciplines with the following qualifications:

Discipline areas:
- Management and Administration – Office Management, Administration, Logistics/ Travel, Communications, Contracting, Clerical/Secretary
- Accounting and Finance – Finance Manager, Senior and Junior Accountants
- Governance – Planning, LGU Coordination, Conflict Management
- Infrastructure – Design Engineer, Civil Designer, CADD Graphics Technician, Document Control Technician, Environmental Assessment Specialist, Construction Supervision Engineer, Site Engineer, Construction Inspectors
- Business Development – Marketing Specialist, Business Organization Liaison, Business Development Manager, Business Promotion Specialist
- Training and Employment – Vocational Training Specialist, Scholarship/Internship Manager, Vocational Education Manager, Vocational Trainers

Education and Experience
- Applicants should provide degree and work experience relevant to discipline and position for which they are applying.
- Strong skills in oral presentations and written communications in English is required, and knowledge of local dialects is an advantage.
- Ability to work well with others in teams, provide leadership and consensus-building is desirable.
- Also desirable is experience in: economic development projects with local government units (LGUs), community development or community organizing, institution-building and training, agricultural development and agri-business, social marketing and advertising campaigns, public relations and media.

Qualified applicants are asked to send an expression of interest letter with a CV and contact address and phone number to **AECOM.GEM@gmail.com** on or before March 26.

Candidates that are short-listed for further consideration with be contacted by firms in the consortium about specific positions that are available and provided more detail.

THE WORLD BANK GROUP IN THE PHILIPPINES
Requires a

FINANCE ANALYST

The Finance Analyst at the Regional Center in Manila is a member of the Disbursement Management Groups in the Loan Department (LOA). The Regional Center Finance Analyst contributes to various team responsibilities, such as disbursement transaction review and analysis, project management, capacity building, and departmental task forces. They play an important role in ensuring the financial accountability of borrowers, specifically that loan proceeds are used for the purposes intended and eligible in accordance with the World Bank policies and procedures. The Regional Center Finance Analyst reports to the Team Leader. The assignment will be a Term appointment for a period of three (3) years subject to a probationary period of one (1) year.

The Regional Center Finance Analyst might be requested to contribute to Departmental or corporate initiatives.

Duties and Accountabilities:

Disbursement Transaction Processing
- Responsible for the first level approval of requests from borrowers for payments and for special commitments. As part of this responsibility, Regional Center Finance Analysts play a key role in ensuring the efficiency and accuracy of processing.
- Analyze and determine the appropriateness of borrowers' requests for disbursements and the supporting documentation (e.g. Statement of Expenditure [SOE] reports, project financial reports [interim unaudited financial reports, financial monitoring reports]). Determine whether they should be approved, reduced or rejected in accordance with Bank's policies and procedures. This requires the identification of irregularities and non-compliance with World Bank procedures and policies, as well as highlighting circumstances for further investigation where the World Bank may be exposed to financial risk.

Portfolio Management
- Manage portfolio administration. Review and clear loan amendments and category reallocations.
- Promote awareness of closing and final application deadline dates, to facilitate efficient closure of loans (including timely submission of disbursement requests/supporting documentation for eligible expenditures, and timely refund of undocumented advances). Monitor compliance with covenants and trigger consideration of remedies, as appropriate.
- Set up loans in the Loan Administration System (LAS), including, where applicable disbursement conditions and retroactive amounts.
- Monitor and take actions on issues regarding the portfolio, including application pipeline, refunds, adjustments special accounts, closing dates, category balances, cancellations, advances to multilateral organization, and refinancing of Project Preparation Facility.
- Monitor borrowers' compliance with procurement threshold and contract payment terms; ensure consistency of payment requests with procurement forms (form-384 contract data).
- Monitor borrowers' utilization of special account funds, ensuring that the funds are properly accounted for and used in accordance with Bank procedures.
- Manage the outstanding special commitments, including committed amounts and expiry dates.
- Monitor daily exception screens in the Loan Administration System (LAS).
- Liaise with Trust Funds Division in Accounting Department (ACTTF) on outstanding contributions, reconciliations, refunds, and cancellations, etc.
- Participate in disbursement supervision missions with emphasis on application preparation and use of special accounts and statements of expenditure.
- Provide input on audit reviews, and monitor borrower compliance with audit findings, as requested by the Team Leader and/or Finance Officer.

Client Support
- Perform client support activities associated with the payment process.
- Deliver training to operational and financial management Bank staff and borrowers.
- Respond to questions regarding disbursement procedures, financial products and other financial matters.
- Answer questions from Task Team Leaders, borrowers, commercial banks, and suppliers on payments, balances, and application status, as appropriate.
- Support the delivery of project launch workshops when requested by the region.
- Coach and mentor World Bank Country Office disbursement staff, new Finance Analysts (FNs) and Finance Assistants (FAs) on disbursement procedures.

Selection Criteria:
- BA/BS (Bachelor's degree in finance, accounting or business and/or related field.) Preference of Master's Degree or certification in a relevant field (e.g. CPA, CFA, or equivalent).
- 7 years of experience in project accounting and auditing including portfolio management, project implementation, and contract management.
- Understanding of World Bank policies and practices related to disbursement.
- Knowledge and application of the World Bank operational policies (desirable).
- Knowledge of project financial management, internal control systems and contract management.
- Knowledge in interpreting project financial reports (interim audited financial reports, financial monitoring reports) and determining actions to be taken by the World Bank and/or borrowers.
- Ability to follow up on issues raised by the audits.
- Ability to manage multiple tasks and projects and to deal with rapidly shifting priorities and work demands, and willingness to learn new skills and seek help from colleagues.
- Ability to distill and disseminate disbursement and financial management knowledge.
- Ability to communicate effectively, in writing and orally, in English including situations requiring negotiation with Borrower representatives.
- Ability to coach, mentor and develop more junior staff. Experience delivering training and presentations in English.
- Capacity to deal sensitively in multi-cultural environments and build effective working relations with clients and colleagues.

Please send your application letter, with a comprehensive resume with details of your work experience, academic records, recent photo, references (at least three names with full contact details) not later than March 30, 2007. **Only applicants who will be short-listed will be called upon for interview.**

The Human Resource Officer
P.O. Box 400 c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer
5/F Building B, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City

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- With at least two years of relevant teaching & institutional management experience
- Must have completed the following training courses : IMO Model 6.09 and IMO Model Course 3.12

DEAN FOR COLLEGE OF MARINE ENGINEERING
- With a Degree in BSMARE
- A Master's Degree holder
- Holder of a management level certificate (at least a Second Engineer Officer), PRC Certificate of Registration (COR) with at least 12 months sea-going experience as Second Engineer
- With at least two years of relevant teaching & institutional management experience
- Must have completed the following training courses : IMO Model 6.09, and IMO Model Course 3.12

DEAN FOR COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
- Master's degree holder in Engineering *(Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Computer, Industrial and Electronics-Communication)*
- With at least two years of relevant teaching & institutional management experience

INSTRUCTORS FOR ENGINE SIMULATOR COURSE
- With a Degree in BSMT or BSMARE
- Must be holder of Certificate of Instructor's course IMO Model Course 6.09 and IMO Model Course 3.12
- Holder of a management level certificate (PRC Certificate of Registration) with at least 24 months sea-going experience as a Second Engineer

INSTRUCTORS FOR WELDING COURSE
- With relevant experience as welders and attuned to modern technologies in welding practices
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- With a degree in BSN with license
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- Licensed teacher
- prefereably with teaching experience

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VC for Administration
University of Cebu Main Campus, Sanciangco St., Cebu City

For more information, please contact :**UNIVERSITY OF CEBU - MAIN CAMPUS**
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Personally submit your comprehensive resume together with copies of employment certificates, school credentials & 2 pcs. 2x2 photos **before March 22,** for preliminary screening and inclusion in the final interview, to:

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Qualifications: Suitable candidates must have a minimum of two to three years experience in over-the-counter sales/corporate or business travel, with an airline or an IATA approved travel agency. Effective communication skills in written and spoken English are essential along with excellent interpersonal and customer service skills. Knowledge of Arabic would be an advantage.

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Shortlisted candidates will be contacted for the selection process in Manila at the end of March 2007.

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All applicants must apply to www.emiratesgroupcareers.com and bring their online reference number to IPAMS. Applicants from Metro Manila and Luzon must personally report asap for IPAMS initial screening. Applicants from Visayas, Mindanao may initially transmit your comprehensive resume to our e-mail info@ipams.com or courier for initial evaluation. Submit your comprehensive resume together with copies of employment certificates, school credentials & 2 pcs. 2x2 photos to:

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Pricing Analysts (Ref: EP/KP/5615)
Meticulous and analytical professionals to support our revenue accounting activities. Prime responsibilities will include interpreting prorate agreements and fares and streamlining airline document pricing in line with them.

Revenue Accounts Officers (Ref: RAO/NH/6151)
Competent team players with a keen eye for detail and quality, capable of managing revenue processing units, identifying revenue leakage areas, ensuring timely corrective action and continuously reviewing Fare and Rate audit functions.

Senior Accounts Assistants (Ref: SAA/KP/5869)
Results-orientated and meticulous professionals to reconcile the Sales, Interline and Revenue related activities while identifying and evaluating accounting differences between the head office and individual stations.

For further information, visit **www.emiratesgroupcareers.com** and apply online using the relevant reference numbers mentioned above.

Applicants from Metro Manila and Luzon must personally report for IPAMS initial screening. Applicants from Visayas, Mindanao may submit their updated and comprehensive resume, copies of employment certificates, school credentials and two 2x2 photographs to info@ipams.com. Alternatively, the documents may be mailed to IPAMS, 1455 Leon Guinto Sr. St. Malate, Manila 1004.

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INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN METRO MANILA AREA STARTING MARCH 26 THRU APRIL 6.

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- Team player with excellent communication skills
- Has program/project management, monitoring and evaluation skills including proposal development
- Excellent interpersonal skills and culturally sensitive
- Willing to travel often

Send your letter and resumé with photo not later than March 23 to:

THE HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT
c/o Sylvina Ignacio
27th Flr. Citibank Tower, Paseo de Roxas,
Makati City
Tel No. 8480601 loc 143
Or email: signacio@consuelo.org

WANTED for newly open high grade salon

SENIOR HAIR STYLISTS
JUNIOR HAIR STYLISTS
MANICURISTS
RECEPTIONISTS

Qualifications:
- at least 5 years work experience in salon
- willing to be trained
- not more than 35 years old
- English literate

Pls. contact us at ☎ 534-1756 or 0927-4168198
look for Ms. Liezel

MINAMI The Premier Salon, Inc.
Lee Gardens Condo, Shaw Blvd. cor
Lee St., Mandaluyong City
near Wackwack Golf Course

Specialty Paper Distributor
looking for an
Account Officer
- Female, not over 30 years old
- Graduate of any 4-year course
- Computer literate with good oral & written communication skills

Please send your resumé with 2x2 photo to P.O. Box 4236 Manila or to email address: **specpaper@yahoo.com.ph**

JOB OPENING
For SM and Robinsons Dept. Store
- S'lady/Stockman
- Acctg/Encoder
- Cashier/Clerk
- Merchandiser
- Kitchen Helper
- Checker/Promo
- Service Crew
- Ofc. Personnel
- Promodizer
- Waiter/ Waitress

Suite 201 2nd Flr. VI-LA Bldg.
EDSA beside SS Bldg.
Top of Natasha Cubao, Q.C.
near Cubao MRT Station

mister Donut
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
PLANT MANAGER / PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR
- At least 2yrs. work experience directly managing subordinates/workers
- Proficient in MS Excel spreadsheet reports
- Cost control experience
- Willing to handle night shift production
- Preferably with experience in a food manufacturing environment

PLS EMAIL YOUR RESUME TO:
ric.macedonio@misterdonut.ph

For your Classified and Obituary Ads please call:
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Opportunity knocks but once.

JOB Market ONLINE
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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DROP YOUR RESUMES OFF IN DROP BOXES AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS BRANCHES:

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Mandaluyong	SM Megamall, 5/L Bldg. B. EDSA	**Manila**	G/F Trinity Bldg., TM Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila	**Or log on to www.jobmarketonline.com.**	

ABENSON

Cool Summer Top Appliance Picks

Super Sulit Deals

P 8,998
P1,499.66 /mo.
CONDURA
FP-WCOND006EA
0.5 HP / Manual
0% INTEREST

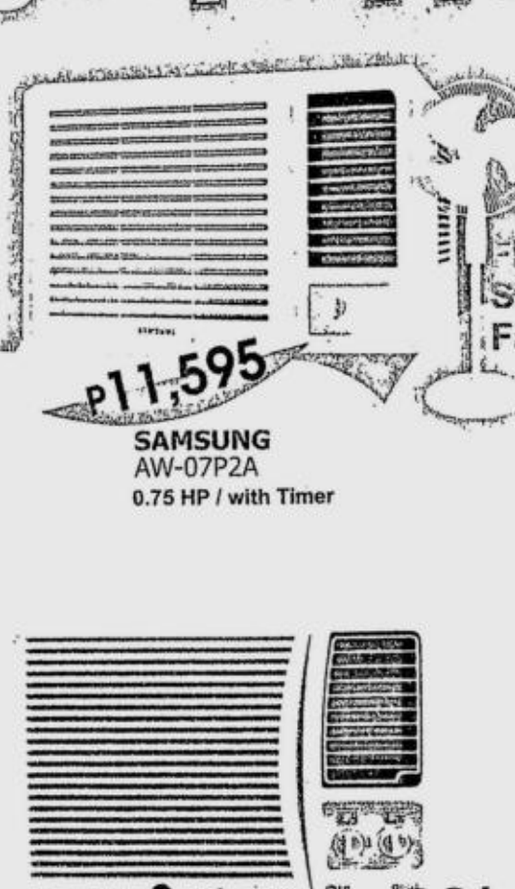
SUPER SULIT DEALS
P8,748
P1,458 /mo.
LG
060MG
0.6HP
0% INTEREST 12 MONTHS

P11,595
SAMSUNG
AW-07P2A
0.75 HP / with Timer
FREE Stand Fan

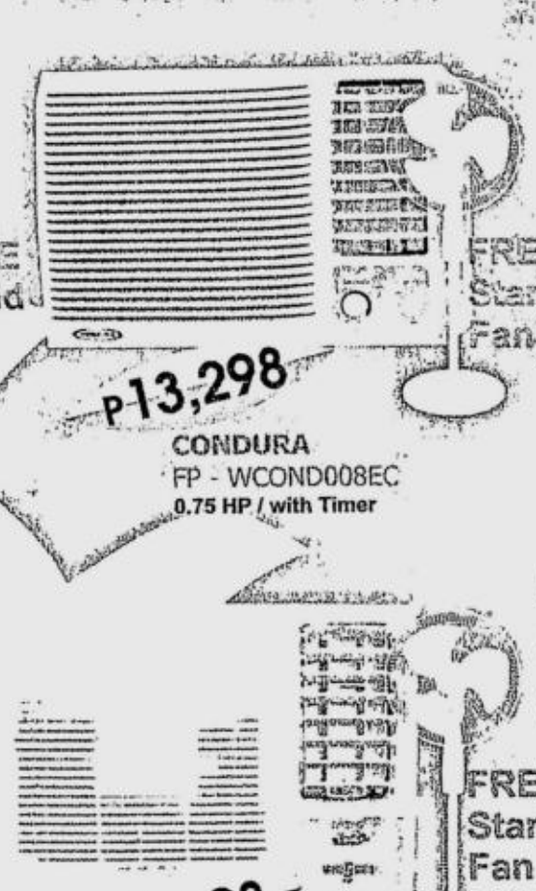
P13,298
CONDURA
FP - WCOND008EC
0.75 HP / with Timer
FREE Stand Fan

PANASONIC
NR-A605DC
6 C.F
Single Door
FREE! E-Kettle
P11,199

LG
GR-U232RL
8 C.F
2 Door
No Frost
FREE! E-Kettle
P15,998

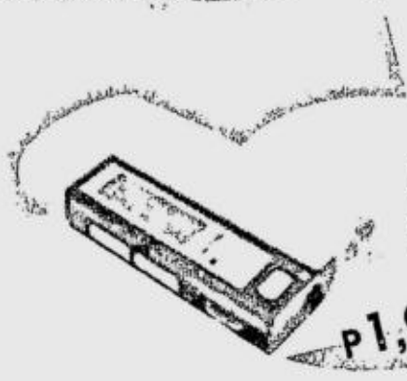


P13,398
P1,116.50 /mo.
LG
LA100MG
1 HP / Manual
add P1,000 for a Microwave Oven on cash purchases only
0% INTEREST 12 MONTHS

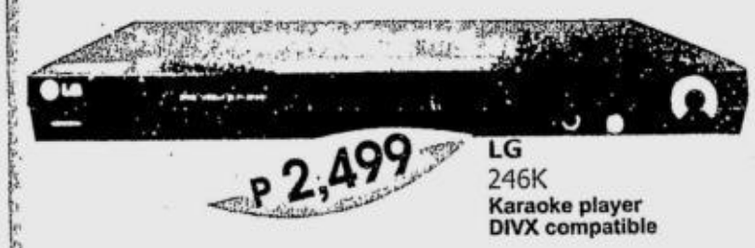


P14,498
CARRIER
FP-WCARF008EC SC
.75 HP with Timer
FREE Stand Fan

0% applicable provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank Terms and Conditions. Price, promo, visual and specification may change without prior notice.



CREATIVE
TX FM
256 MB
with FM Radio
P1,999



P 2,499
LG
246K
Karaoke player
DIVX compatible

P7,498
P624.83 /mo.
SAMSUNG
A403
4 Megapixels
0% INTEREST 12 MONTHS

P8,950
P497.22 /mo.
WOW MAGIC SING
SILVER FIESTA
ED9000 EDITION
0% INTEREST 10 MONTHS

P27,999
P1,166.62 /mo.
SONY
DCR HC46
MINI DV FORMAT
1 MEGAPIXEL ENGINE
MEMORY STICK DUO SLOT
2.7" LCD SCREEN
0% INTEREST 24 MONTHS
P2,000 Handycam accessory GC
P5,000 Photo Printer GC

Join
Abenson Cool Summer Pick-a-Prize Promo!

Get a chance to win 1 MILLION in prizes!
Metrobank Card Members get 2x Sure Prizes card

Promo Period: March 01 to April 30, 2007
BTI NCR Permit no 0829 Series of 2007

PhotoDV
FORM & FUNCTION PERFECTED

Canon
Delighting You Always

LET OUR TECHNOLOGY MOVE YOU.

Capture still photos and record videos simultaneously with Photo DV.

Get photo and video output with vibrant, lifelike quality with the Canon exclusive
DIGIC DV Imaging Processor.

Reduce glare and ghosting and wobble blurs. Expect only images with exceptional clarity, contrast and resolution with
Superb Optical Performance.

Enjoy home movies with a theater-like viewing experience when you record in
True High Resolution 16:9 Widescreen

POWERED BY DiGiC DV

Canon Digital Camcorders.

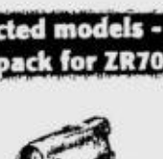
ELURA 100
- 1.33 megapixels
- 20x Optical Zoom

Get a free carrying case and miniDV tape for selected models - Elura 100, ZR500, ZR600 and ZR700; plus a battery pack for ZR700.

ZR100
- 680,000 pixels
- 20x Optical Zoom

ZR500
- 680,000 pixels
- 25x Optical Zoom

ZR600
- 680,000 pixels
- 25x Optical Zoom
- XGA digital still recording



ZR700
- 680,000 pixels
- 25x Optical Zoom
- XGA digital still recording
- Built-in video light

Insist on an original warranty issued by Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc.

Promo Period: March 1 to March 31, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0787, Series of 2007.

Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc. 2F Marvin Plaza, 2153 Don Chino Roces Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City
Tel.: 884-9000 • Fax: 810-9797 • info@canon.com.ph • www.canon.com.ph

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appliance ABENSON avanti ABENSON Ambassador Anson's PHOTOLINE Picture City WESTERN SM HART AVSurfer VillMan Mugle SILICON VALLEY

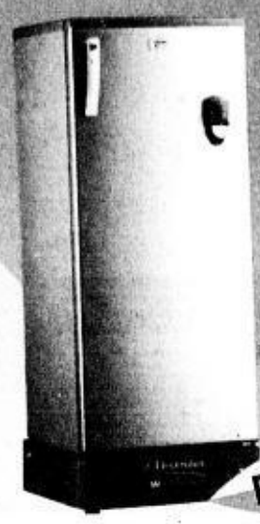
FREE KETTLE

When you buy a refrigerator*
*Participating models on cash purchases

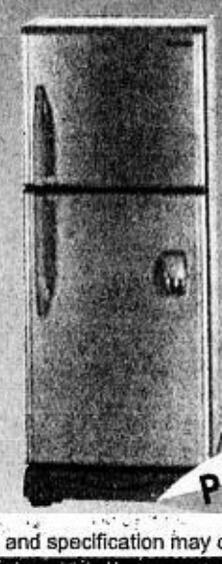
ABENSON

CONDURA
CS050SA-PR
5 C.F.
Single Door
FREE! E-Kettle
₱9,698

SHARP
SJ-19T(S)
6.4CF
Single Door
FREE! E-Kettle
₱10,195



WHITE WESTINGHOUSE
WR1805CD SS
6CF with Water Dispenser
FREE! E-Kettle
₱12,998

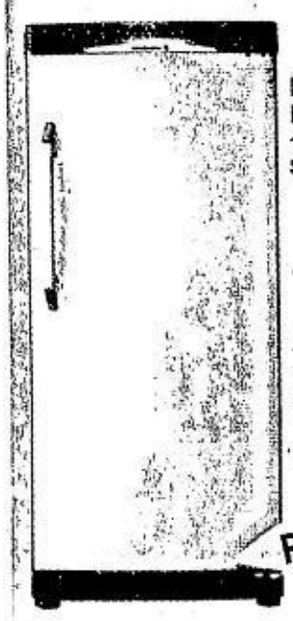


PANASONIC
NR-B805DC
Semi-Automatic
8 C.F.
FREE! E-Kettle
₱15,999

0% applicable provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank Terms and Conditions.

Price, promo, visual and specification may change without prior notice.

SAMSUNG
RT24MHSS
8.5 C.F.
Two Door
FREE! E-Kettle
₱15,695



KELVINATOR
KS100MN AX
10 C.F.
Single Door
FREE! E-Kettle
₱16,098

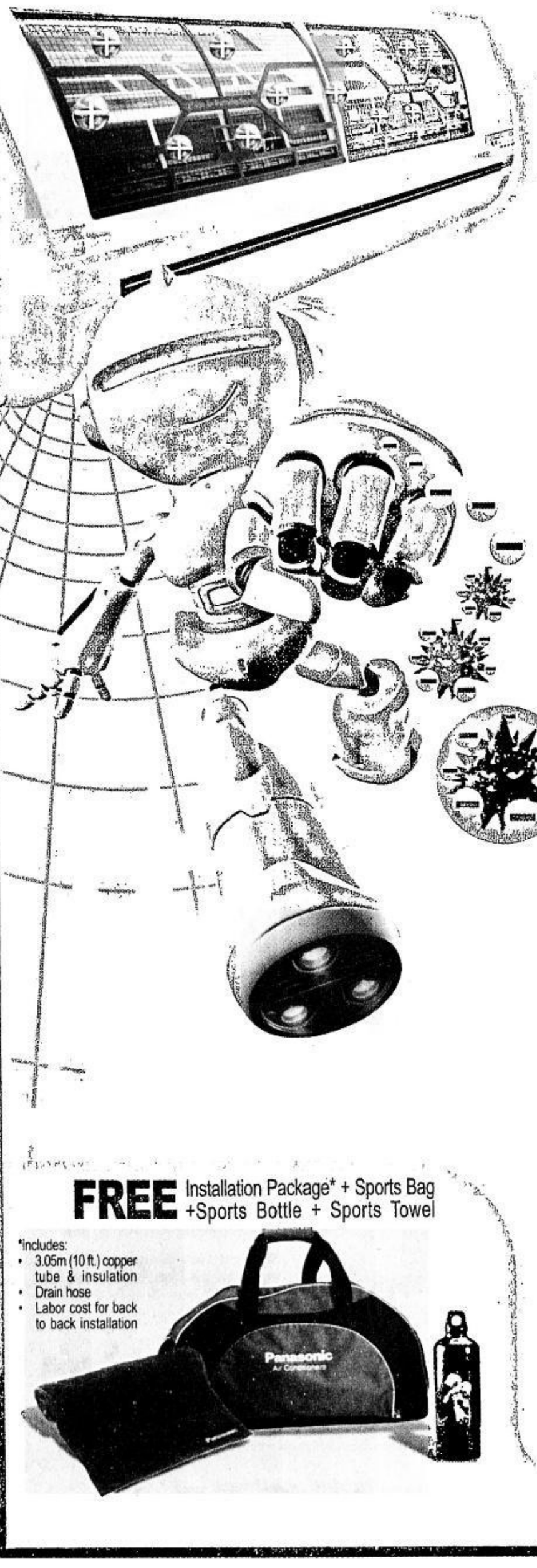
LG
GR-S352QLC/D
10 C.F.
2 DOOR REF
FREE! E-Kettle
₱22,698

ELECTROLUX
WR3606DT SX
12 C.F. NF 2-DOOR
FREE! E-Kettle
₱31,700

WHIRLPOOL
Chest Freezer WHB 17
17 C.F.
₱28,998

Panasonic
ideas for life

envio p2
Environmental Innovation



BATTLES Airborne Dust!

Now you can breathe easier with ENVIO p2! This latest innovation from Panasonic air conditioners detects dust automatically and traps the particles electrically to give you fresher, cleaner air.

NEW **e-ion Air Purifying System with Patrol Sensor**

Now it cleans in 4 simple steps:

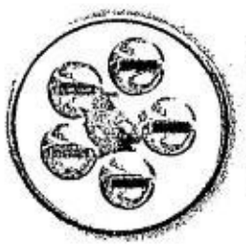
1. Scan to Detect Dust

The **Patrol Sensor** monitors the quality of the air. Once dust is detected, it activates the air purifying function. It even works when the air conditioner is switched off.

2. Shoots and Catches

The **e-ion Generator** then shoots out 3 trillion* e-ions which stick onto dust particles.

* Conditions apply.



3. Charges & Deactivates

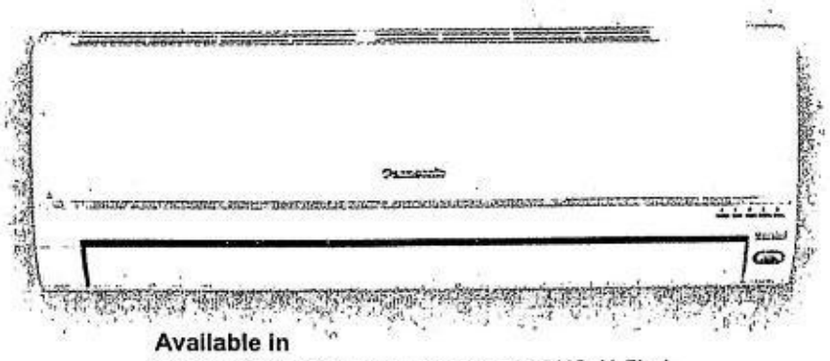
Once negatively charged, the dust particles are quickly deactivated.

4. Captures Electrically

The positively charged **e-ion Filter** then easily traps the deactivated dust particles.

FREE Installation Package* + Sports Bag +Sports Bottle + Sports Towel

*includes:
- 3.05m (10 ft.) copper tube & insulation
- Drain hose
- Labor cost for back to back installation



Available in
CS/CU-C9GKQ (1.0hp), CS/CU-C12GKQ (1.5hp),
CS/CU-C18GKQ (2.0hp), CS/CU-C24GKQ (2.5hp)

* Available in all dealers with promo posters. See posters for details. Promo Period: March 1 - June 30, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0705 Series of 2007.

ALLNEW LOWER LCD PRICES!

ABENSON

P 59,900 SAMSUNG LA32S71 32" LCD TV 0% INTEREST
P3,327.77 /mo.

P 59,999 LG 32LC2R 32" LCD TV 0% INTEREST 12 MONTHS
P4,999.91 /mo.

P 69,980 PHILIPS 32PF7321 32" LCD TV 0% INTEREST
P2, 915.33 /mo.

0% applicable provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank Terms and Conditions.

Price, promo, visual and specification may change without prior notice.

Ambilight's amazing ambient lighting concept makes viewing sparkle in a whole new light. Immersive viewing experience, extended big screen impact, enhanced detail plus total relaxation. All you'll ever want.

P 74,990 SONY 32S200 32" LCD TV 0% INTEREST
P6,249.16 /mo.
FREE SONY BRAVIA VOUCHER

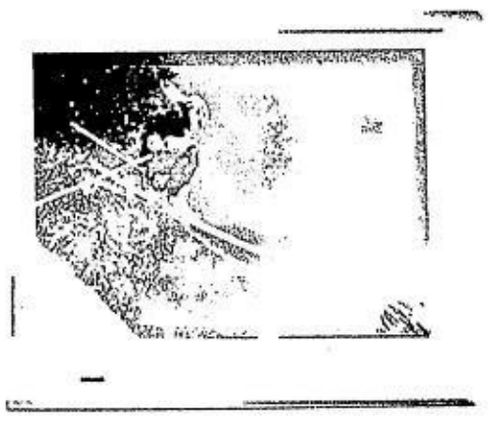
P 89,998 SHARP LC32BX6M 32" LCD TV 0% INTEREST
P7,499.83 /mo.
FREE 21"TV VFR310S
FREE 30GB iPOD

50PF9531 PHP289,980.00
127cm (50") Plasma TV with Pixel Plus 2HD and Ambilight 2 channel
FREE HTS3110 Home Theater System

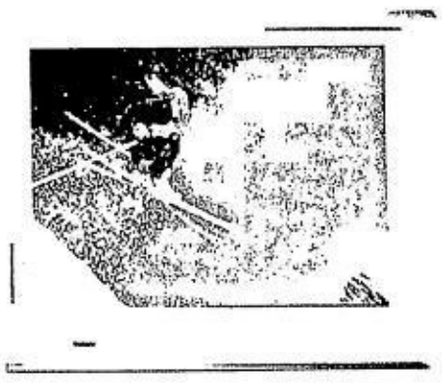
42PF9541 PHP189,980.00
106.68cm (42") LCD TV with Pixel Plus 2HD and Ambilight 2 channel
FREE HTS3110 Home Theater System

32PF9531 PHP119,980.00
81.28cm (32") LCD TV with Pixel Plus 2HD and Ambilight 2 channel
FREE HTS3110 Home Theater System

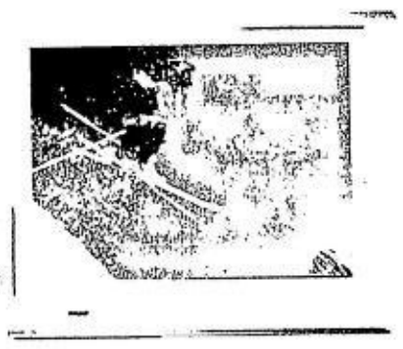
P129,900 FREE!
SAMSUNG LA40S71 40" LCD TV
20" LCD LNR 2050 (cash purchases only)



29PT5026 PHP27,980.00
73.66cm (29") Real Flat CRT TV with Crystal Clear
FREE TV Stand & MCD 109



25PT5016 PHP15,980.00
63.5cm (25") Real Flat CRT TV with Crystal Clear
12 months 0% interest
FREE TV Stand



21PT5026 PHP14,970.00
53.34cm (21") Real Flat CRT TV with Crystal Clear
12 months 0% interest
FREE TV Stand & MCD 109

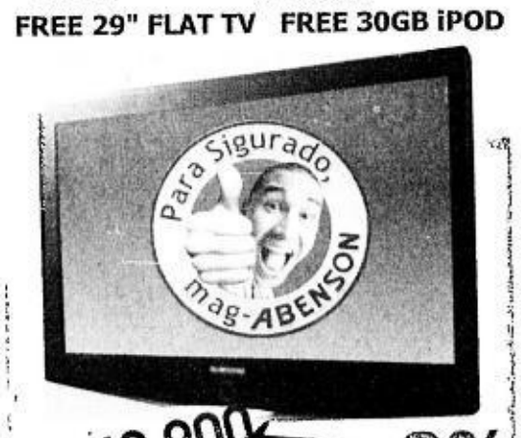
P129,998 SHARP 37BX6M 37" LCD TV
FREE 29" FLAT TV FREE 30GB iPOD

DVDR3455H PHP23,990.00
DVD Player/Recorder with 160GB Hard Disk
FREE P1,500 GC (for cash buyer)

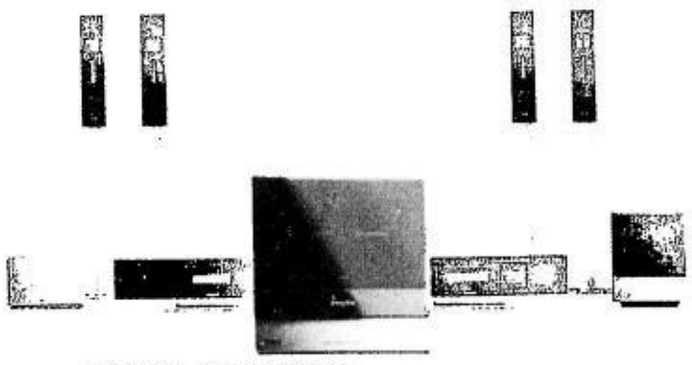
DVP5965K PHP5,990.00
DVD Player with Video Upscalling up to 1080i
6 Months 0% interest
FREE HDMI Cable

DVP3026K PHP2,990.00
DVD Player with6 Channel Out
6 Months 0% interest

PET725 PHP12,990.00
Portable DVD Player
6 months 0% interest



P149,900 SAMSUNG LA-40R71 40" LCD TV 0% INTEREST 12 MONTHS
P12,491.66 /mo.
FREE 21" TV (CT-21Z40MQ)



HTS9800 PHP56,990.00
Home Theater System with 6.1 Dolby Digital EX, HDMI, Wireless rear speakers
FREE P3,000 GC (for cash buyer)

HTS4750 PHP26,990.00
Home Theater System with HDMI, DTS, Dolby Digital and Pro Logic II, Karaoke
FREE P2,000 GC (for cash buyer)

HTS3110 PHP16,990.00
Home Theater System with DTS, Dolby Digital and Pro Logic II, Karaoke
12 months 0% Interest

P154,990 SONY KLV 40S200 40" LCD TV 0% INTEREST 12 MONTHS
P12,915.83 /mo.
FREE SONY BRAVIA VOUCHER

See print ad for details.

PROMO RUNS UNTIL MARCH 31, 2007

Participating banks: Citibank • Equitable • AIG • BPI • Union Bank • HSBC • SB Cards • Bankard • Metrobank • BDO

0% interest is subject to bank approval and valid only if monthly bills are paid in full.

Philips Electronics & Lighting, Inc.
48th and 49th Floor PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Avenue, corner V.A. Rufino Street, Makati City, Philippines 1227
Tel: Toll Free 1-800-10 PHILIPS (1-8000-10-7445477) Consumer Electronics

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PHILIPS
sense and simplicity

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0645 Series of 2007.

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Easy Financing

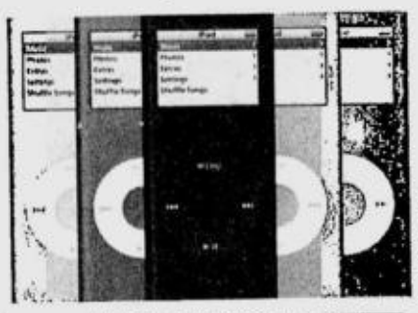
AFFORDABLE MONTHLY INSTALLMENTS up to 24 months

ACER
ASPIRE 5570ANWXi
- Core Solo T1350(1.86Ghz, 2MB, 533FSB)
- 512MB DDR2, 80GB IDE HDD
- 14.1" WVGA TFT Crystalbrite LCD
- Built-in Combo Drive
- 5-in-1 Card Reader
- Linux Operating System

24 months Super Installment P2,335/mo

MABUHAY MAGIC SING
ED800
USB Ready
2,064 Built in songs

24 months Super Installment P670/mo



APPLE iPOD
NANO 2GB
- Hold 500 songs
- Up to 24 Hours music Playback
- 1.5" Color LCD

24 months Super Installment P527/mo

JVC
21VA15
21" Flat Screen

24 months Super Installment 585/mo

LG
R21FX4L
21" Flat Screen

24 months Super Installment P606/mo

LG
DKS-6100
DVD / KARAOKE

12 months Super Installment 824/mo

CANON
IXUSi7
7.1 Megapixels

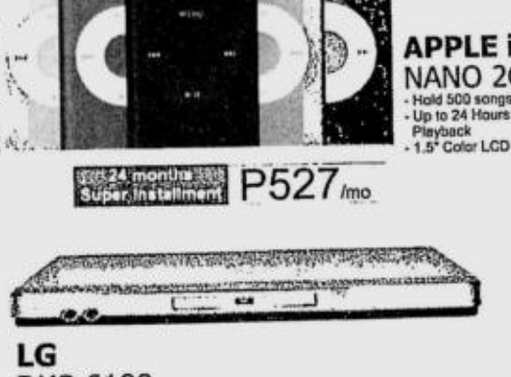
24 months Super Installment P1,167/mo

SONY
HC 28
1/6" Advanced HAD™ CCD Imager
680K Pixels Gross
20X Optical/800X Digital Zoom
Carl Zeiss® Vario-Tessar® Lens
Super SteadyShot®
Picture Stabilization System

24 months Super Installment P1,287/mo

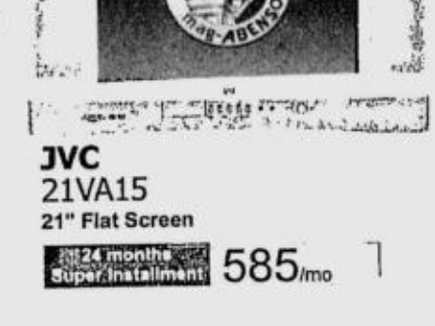
SHARP
R-390 HSS
4 REHEAT MENU
34 Liters

12 months Super Installment P659/mo



SONY
KV-SW212N50
21" Flat Screen

24 months Super Installment P643/mo



LG
LA080MG
.75 HP

24 months Super Installment P726/mo

SHARP
SJ-22T
Semi-Automatic
7.5 C. F.

24 months Super Installment P643/mo

FREE Deskfan*

Client is entitled to a Free Deskfan for purchase P 20,000 and above thru Easy Buy Financing.. Credit provided by Citifinancial Corp (Phil.). All loans are subject to Credit Standard Terms and Conditions.

ABENSON

ABENSON
Cool Summer
Gadget Gear up
March 15 to April 01,2007

0% Interest Installment up to 24 months

get a chance to **WIN**
1 of 5 JVC MP3 Players
simply visit the exhibit

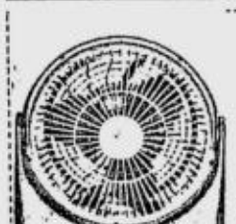
1st Floor Pedro [illegible] (In front of Swa[illegible]
Tel. No. 536-7914 / 400-024[illegible]

ROBINSONS Place

Own a WOW! now
ONLY P497.22/mo.
Silver Fiesta • 18 months 0% Installment

the best-selling magic sing
Promo Period: March 3 to May 31, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0912 Series of 2007. See posters for details
0% interest is subject to bank approval and valid if monthly bills are paid in full

ABENSON



FREE
MINI FAN
for a minimum Paylite purchase of P25,000

citibank

Valid for Citibank Paylite transactions only
Strictly one (1) coupon per transaction
Cannot be used in conjunction with other promotions
Promo Period March 15 to April 30, 2007
Present this coupon to avail of promo
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0629 Series of 2007
SKU #7018

ABENSON

FREE
COOLER BAG
for a minimum HSBC installment purchase of P3,000

HSBC
The world's local bank

Valid for HSBC transactions only
Strictly one (1) coupon per transaction
Cannot be used in conjunction with other promotions
Promo Period March 15 to April 30, 2007
Present this coupon to avail of promo
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0629 Series of 2007
SKU #7019

ABENSON

FREE
SUMMER TUMBLER
for a minimum purchase of P5,000 using your Metrobank

METROBANK

Valid for Metrobank transactions only
Strictly one (1) coupon per transaction
Cannot be used in conjunction with other promotions
Promo Period March 15 to April 30, 2007
Present this coupon to avail of promo
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0629 Series of 2007
SKU #7017

ABENSON

FREE
COFFEE TUMBLER
for a minimum cash purchase of P5,000

Valid for cash transactions only
Strictly one (1) coupon per transaction
Cannot be used in conjunction with other promotions
Promo Period March 15 to April 30, 2007
Present this coupon to avail of promo
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0629 Series of 2007
SKU #7155

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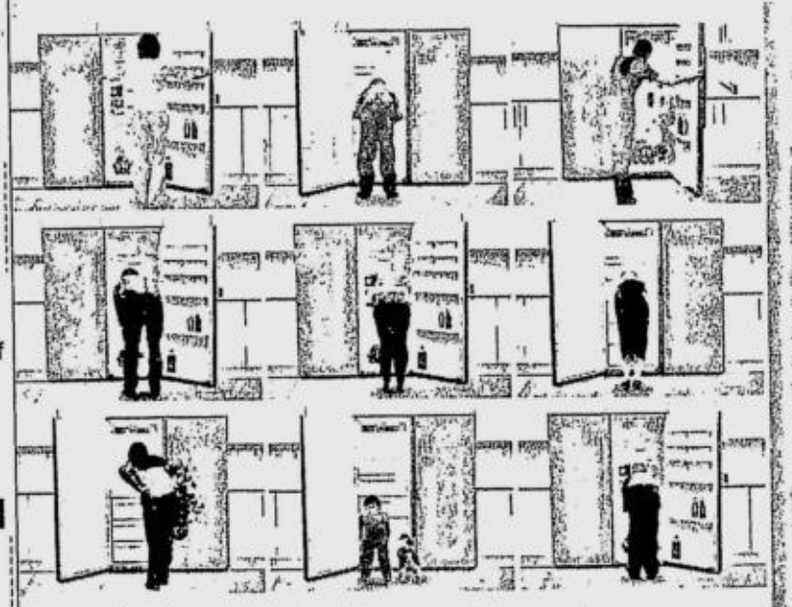

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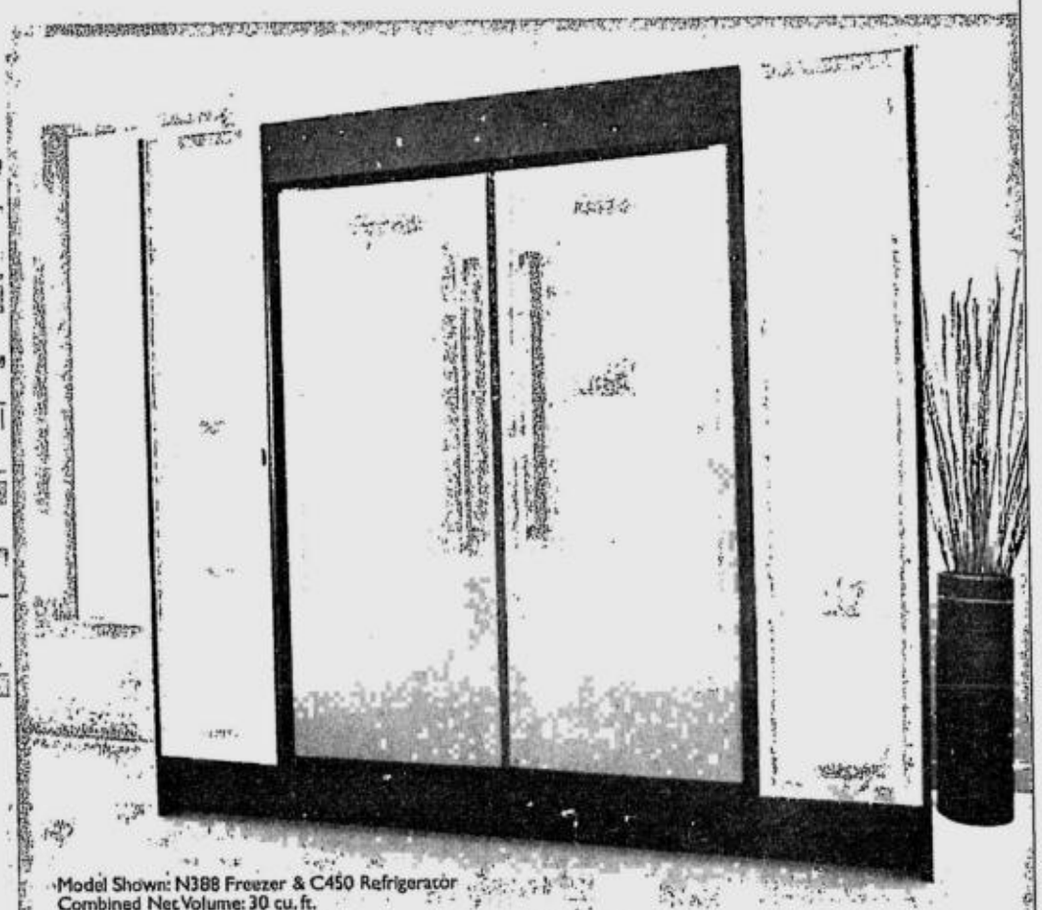

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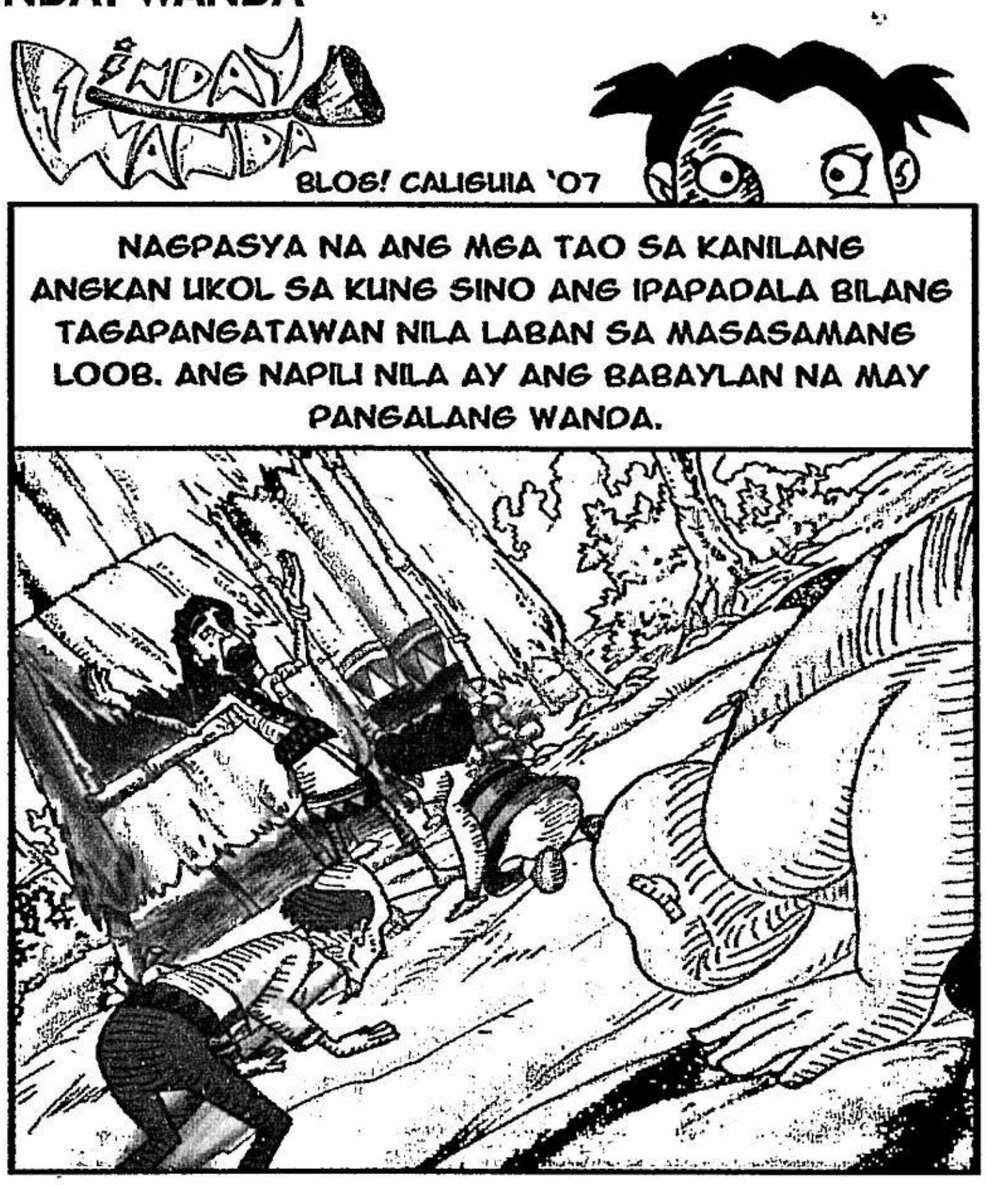

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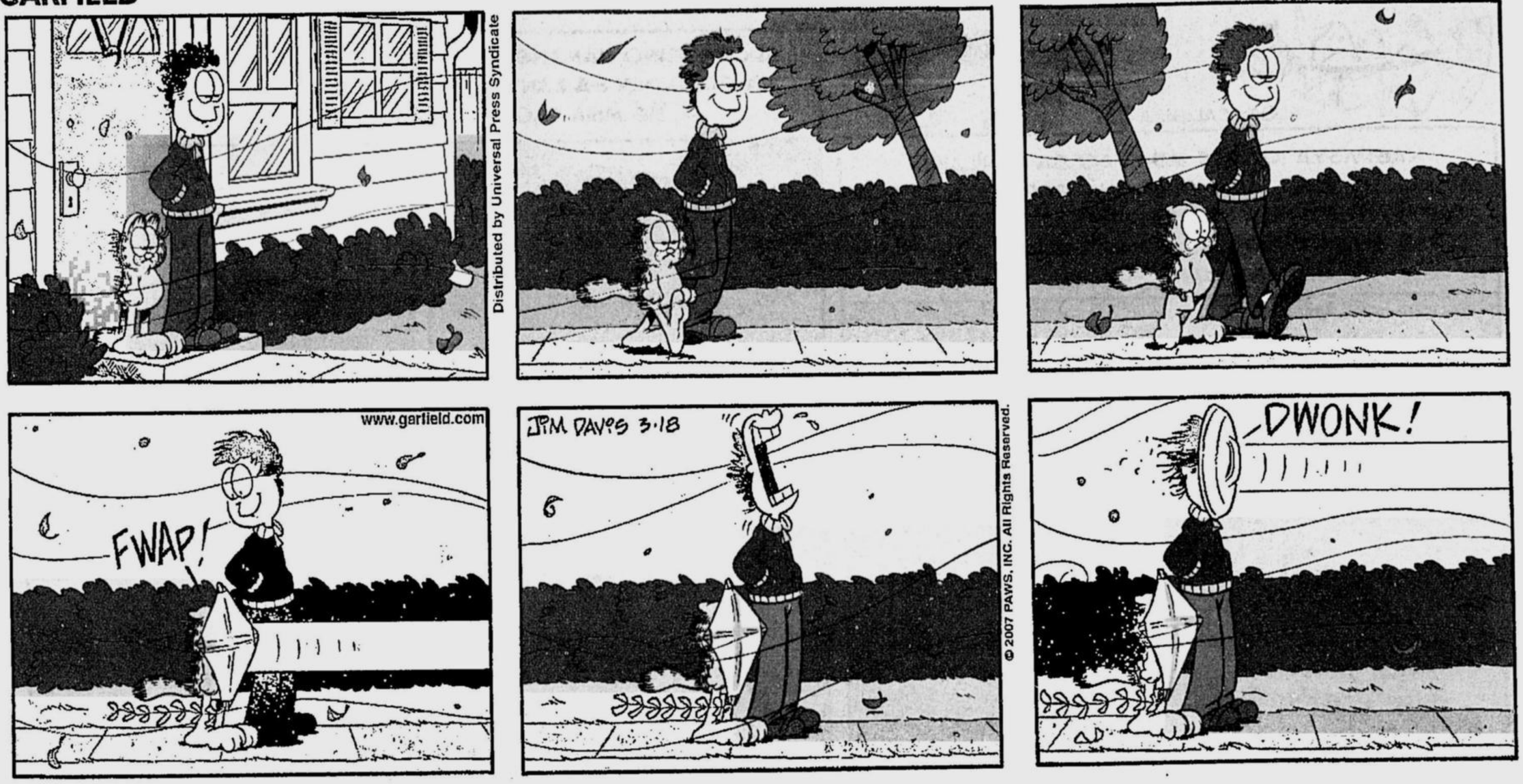

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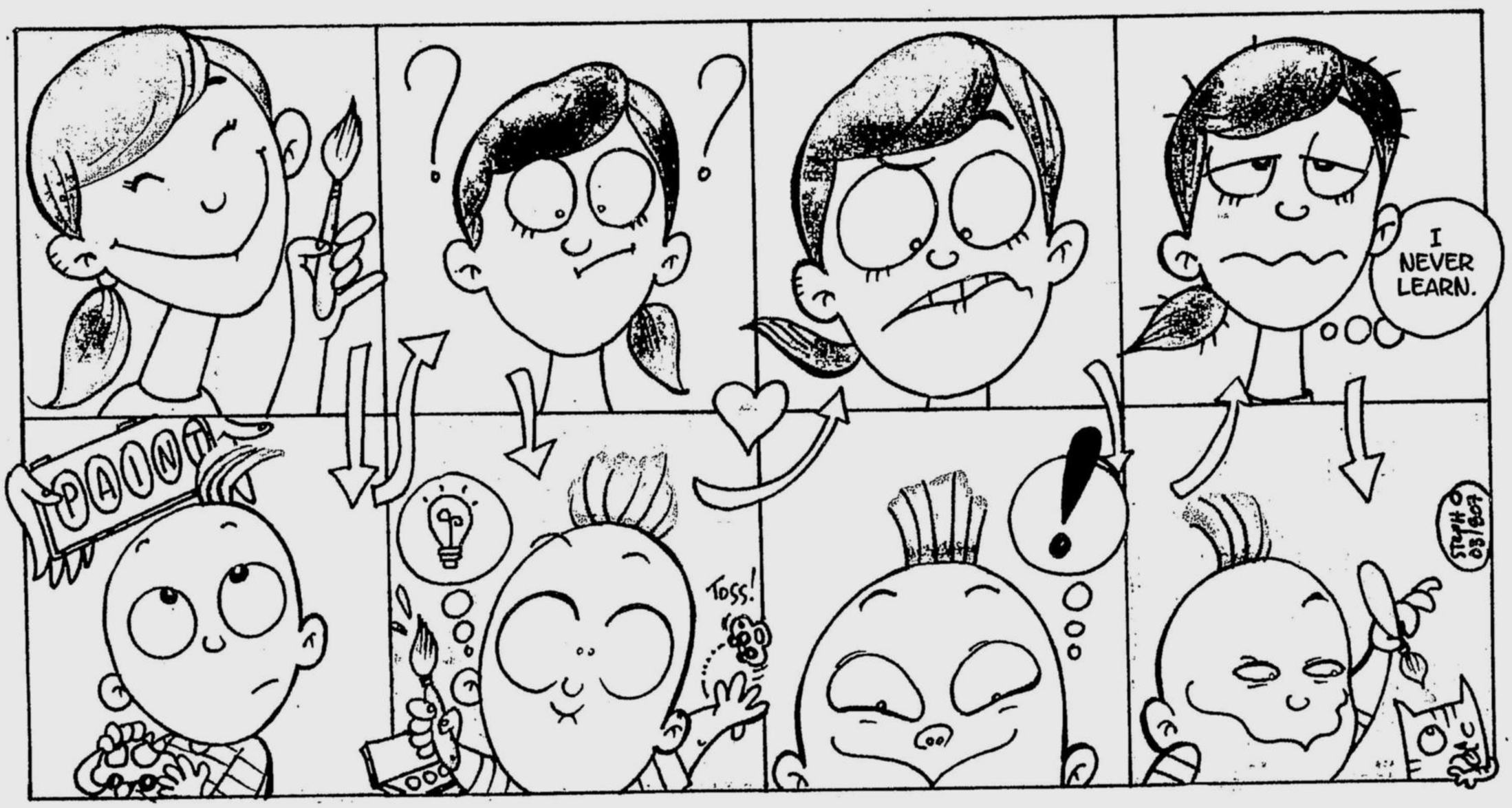

*sunday*INQUIRER*magazine*

FREE

March 18, 2007

Summer Getaway

Harbour Centre's players take a timeout

plus Scooter Culture • Best of Bora b[illegible]es • How to star in a reality show • Mo[illegible]

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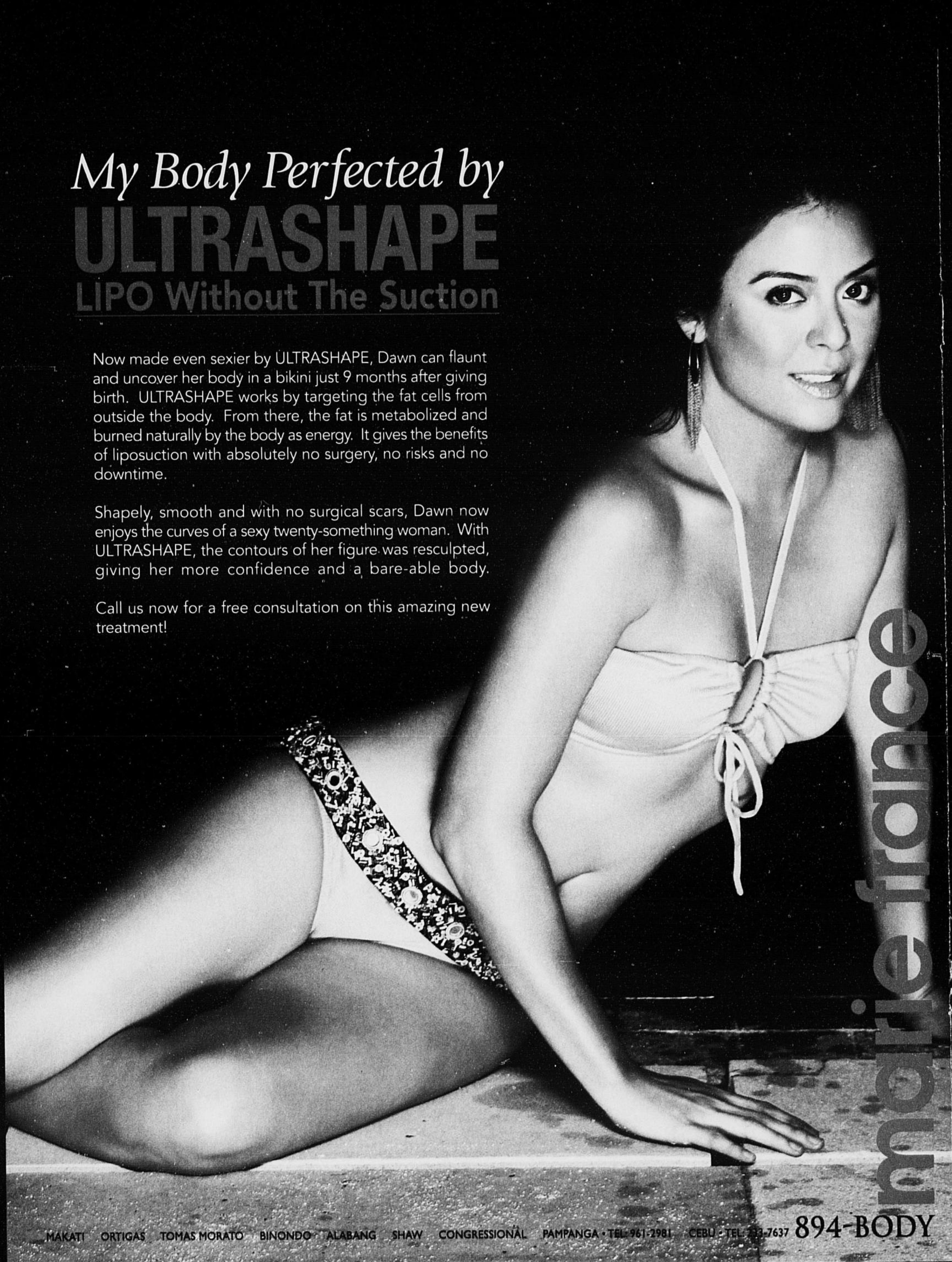

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By Eric S. Caruncho

The Scoots of Summer

For better or for worse, this is scooter culture, Pinoy-style, and it's taking over the streets

I HAVE seen the future of Manila, and it rolls on two wheels.

I was waiting for the green light at a traffic stop when my ears were assailed by one of those awful hip-hop remixes of senti Tagalog ballads—the kind jeepney drivers like to torture their passengers with.

Only it wasn't a jeepney that had rolled up next to me.

It was a Honda XRM, though barely recognizable under all the accessorizing that the owner—nonchalantly smoking a cigarette, no helmet, the better to chat with his passenger, also sans brain bucket—had lavished on it.

Objects of desire: Scooters have become the first step in upward mobility for lower middle class folk

To begin with, all the bodywork had been replaced with gold. Or gold-colored plastic. Every manner of garish anodized aluminum gimcrack had been installed. The handlebars had been cut to a rakish angle. A gleaming new performance exhaust pipe gave its relatively puny 110cc engine a deep-throated roar, although I don't know why the owner bothered, since it was drowned out by the stereo system.

Yes. The scooter had a stereo system, and not a cheap one at that. It was a pretty good component system with subwoofer, amp, tweeters, the lot—the better to annoy other people with the owner's lousy taste in music.

All in all, the accessorizing and customizing probably cost more than the scooter itself.

It would have been terrible if it hadn't been so... Pinoy.

For better or for worse, this is scooter culture, Pinoy-style, and it's taking over the streets.

Sure there's a handful of vintage scooter enthusiasts who like to get together on their Vespas and pretend they're Mods and that it's still 1964. (Oi, I'm one of them.) But their numbers are dwarfed by the teeming masses who are flocking to motorcycle dealerships and plunking down as little as P2,500 for a down payment on a Honda XRM or Wave. Or a Suzuki Raider. Or a Yamaha Nuovo. Or any number of even cheaper Chinese-made clones now flooding the market.

These are the "underbones," so called because they're built around a simple J-frame, the "bone," and strictly speaking, not really scooters but small motorcycles, developed specifically by the major Japanese motorcycle companies for the Southeast Asian market. Lightweight, designed to twist and go, with automatic transmissions and beefy suspensions for potholed streets, underbones rule the streets in Bangkok, Jakarta and now Manila.

Last year, Honda sold over 500,000 units. This year, the company is reportedly opening a new plant to keep up with the demand. Their best-selling model is the XRM, which the company designed specifically for Manila 's urban jungle. It's a cross between a trail bike and a scooter, perfect for weaving in and out of the city's traffic-choked streets, nimble enough to hop curbs as warranted, and with enough shock absorption to cushion the rider from the jolts of Manila's pockmarked pavements.

And that's only Honda. Yamaha, Suzuki, Kawasaki, not to mention the Taiwanese and the Chinese, are not far behind. And sales have yet to plateau.

Of course, it would be unfair (and inaccurate) to characterize the typical underbone rider as the aforementioned "*jologs*"—they are only the most flamboyant and visible among them. Most would seem to be average, low- to lower-middle-income earning family men (and in growing numbers, women) for whom purchasing a scooter is the first step in upward mobility.

"The scooter is so versatile," says Nani Juarez, a.k.a. "Dr. Scoot," technical editor of the bimonthly Scooterista magazine, so far the only local publication wholly devoted to the Philippine scooter scene. He is also

one of the partners in 2211 Cycle Works, dealers of the prestigious Italian scooter brand Piaggio, and specialists in servicing European scooters such as the Vespa.

"It has so many advantages—rideability, ease of use, storage capacity, maneuverability in traffic, affordability. It's like a car, only with two wheels. And you don't worry about gas prices. An underbone's full tank is only four liters, and you can get 200 kilometers out of it so that's a big plus. You can go where you want to go. You become more productive."

Quite simply, having a scooter is a liberating experience. The working man is freed from the vagaries of public transport, the congested streets and traffic jams. Daily chores such as marketing and ferrying kids to school become a breeze rather than a grind. Juarez stops short of fully endorsing the scooter as a family ride, although that is also a growing trend, hubby with wife and kid(s) off on a Sunday outing on the scooter.

The scooter phenomenon, says Juarez, is actually a recent one. Before, there were only motorcycles, most of them utility models made for tricycles and delivery. Then in the late 1990s, the first automatic scooters were smuggled in through Ilocos, introducing Filipinos to their versatility and ease of use, in spite of the fact that they were not really roadworthy because they couldn't be legally registered.

In 1997, a local distributor reintroduced the venerable Vespa PX150, a nearly 30-year-old design, to encouraging sales.

"The real boom came when gas prices rose in 2000," he says. "Scooters became an alternative mode of transport, Honda built a factory, and everyone got into the picture."

Since then, scooters have been growing in number each year. Last year, he says, there were 700,000 cars—and 1.1 million motorbikes—in Metro Manila alone. He thinks the growth will continue for a few more years before plateauing. The advent of easy-terms financing introduced by motorcycle dealers is also fueling the trend, as well as opening a new market in repossessed bikes. Now there are even pawnshops specializing in scooters.

At the same time, the boom has also opened up a thriving business in aftermarket accessories, mostly from Thailand. Tenth Avenue in Caloocan City has become a mecca of sorts for scooter enthusiasts because of the accessories shops and motorcycle dealers clustered there.

In turn, trends in scooter customization are fueling what amounts to Pinoy scooter culture. Like the jeepney before it, the basic scooter is a blank canvas on which the Pinoy imagination can run wild. Body panels are replaced with sleek carbon fiber versions, or airbrushed with custom art. Engines are souped up with performance upgrades such as racing crankshafts, oversized pistons, exhaust pipes. The entire scooter is, in Tagalog, "*binibihisan*"—dressed up, dressed to kill.

"You know the Pinoy—his scooter has to look good, " says Juarez. "*Maborloloy* (decked out). Not to flaunt it, but the scooter has to look trendy. People will spend more on [customizing] the motorcycle than they spent for the motorcycle itself."

At the opposite aesthetic pole are vintage scooter enthusiasts for whom the Vespa, which has evolved very little since its invention in 1946, remains the quintessential scooter. While a minority, these "Vespanatics" are also growing in number, fuelling a thriving trade in second-hand Vespas.

"These people value durability and reliability," says Juarez, who rides a Vespa PX200 himself. "And these scooters appreciate in value. Now you have to pay up to P80,000 for a used Vespa PX150 which cost only P60,000 brand new five years ago." The 2007 model now costs P190,000, but Juarez says they sold out in less than a month.

Juarez says there is already an established local scooter community, bound together to a great extent by the Internet through local sites such as motorcyclephilippines.com, vespinoy.com and euroscoot.net. Events such as scooter rallies, scooter races sponsored by motorcycle and fuel companies and mall shows displaying customized scooters are also becoming significant crowd-drawers.

"The reason we started Scooterista magazine was to educate this community," says Juarez. One of their advocacies, he adds, is rider safety, with particular emphasis on wearing helmets—something that Pinoy riders are still casual about. Juarez would also like to see more stringent licensing and testing, and more riders taking formal lessons from schools such as the Honda Riding Academy and the Motorcyle Riding Course patterned after the US Motorcycle Safety Foundation's curriculum.

"You need to be aware of these things so you don't become a danger to yourself and to others," he says, although he hastens to add that ridden responsibly, bikes are no more dangerous than cars, maybe less so since bikers tend to be more focused on preserving their hides.
Scooter use in the Philippines, he says, is still in the infancy stage, and the best is yet to come. •

Vespas: The "quintessential scooters"

Singing for shelter

Complete performer Cocoy Laurel holds a concert to build homes for Gawad Kalinga's Doy Laurel Village in Batangas

COCOY Laurel has always shone on any performance space: onstage with Repertory Philippines and Cameron Mackintosh's West End Productions and onscreen in several movies. As a singer-thespian he has proved his mettle in not a few musicals from Broadway.

This time around, Cocoy takes up a cause in paying tribute to the memory of his father, former Vice President Salvador Laurel. On March 28, the singer takes center stage at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Main Theater for "Cocoy Laurel in Concert," together with his equally talented sister Iwi Laurel and nieces Nicole Asensio and Denise Laurel.

Cocoy performs for the homeless

Drawing from his extensive experience in musical theater, Cocoy will perform much-loved showstoppers from Broadway's best, interpreting highlights from "South Pacific," "Man From La Mancha," "*Les Miserables*," "The Phantom of the Opera," "Miss Saigon," "Camelot" and "The Fantasticks." Lovers will thrill to his rendition of Latin love songs and traditional Philippine *kundimans*, as well as his original compositions including the Famas Award-winning "*Uliran*."

Proceeds from the concert will go to the Gawad Kalinga-Doy Laurel Village in Balete, Batangas, which will provide shelter for 80 homeless families. Tickets are available at Ticketworld. For inquiries, please call 7238420 and 7215925. •

Imagining Beyond Images

Lensmen take a wide look at two different realms with two new exhibits

THEY are known to be pillars of the photographic landscape they occupy—and now two shows illustrate the power and polish of some of our country's best photographers.

Portraits of the rich and the famous are what Rupert Jacinto does best. From his beginnings in college, he has taken easily to the global stage, snapping the likes of Ivana Trump and Jennifer Gucci.

Now, one can behold Jacinto's latest batch of formal portaits in his forthcoming show, "New Work on Philippine Society," to be unveiled March 29 at Fiamma on Jupiter Street in Bel-Air, Makati. Jacinto will unshutter his takes on 15 new society names such as China Cojuangco, Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Leica Rufino Carpo, Celine Lopez, Hindy Tantoco-Weber, James Chiongbian and Paolo Trillo. After the unveiling, "New Work" moves to Wristpod at Bonifacio

Rupert Jacinto

China Cojuangco

High Street in Taguig for a week-long viewing that's open to the public.

Meanwhile, photo-abstraction takes center stage in "Large 8," currently staged at the Main Mall Atrium of SM Mall of Asia. The exhibit showcases the recent works of top lensmen Bien Bautista, BenCab, Quincy Castillo, Emil Davocol, Pancho Escaler, Jojo Guingona, Wig Tysmans and Jaime Zobel. The show moves to SM Megamall on March 21 and SM Baguio on March 29. •

Figure It Out

P111.5 billion: Income from tourism in 2004

P60.3 billion: Income from tourism in 1994

617,239: Number of visitors to Laguna, the most visited province, January to June 2006

7,107: Official number of islands in the Philippines

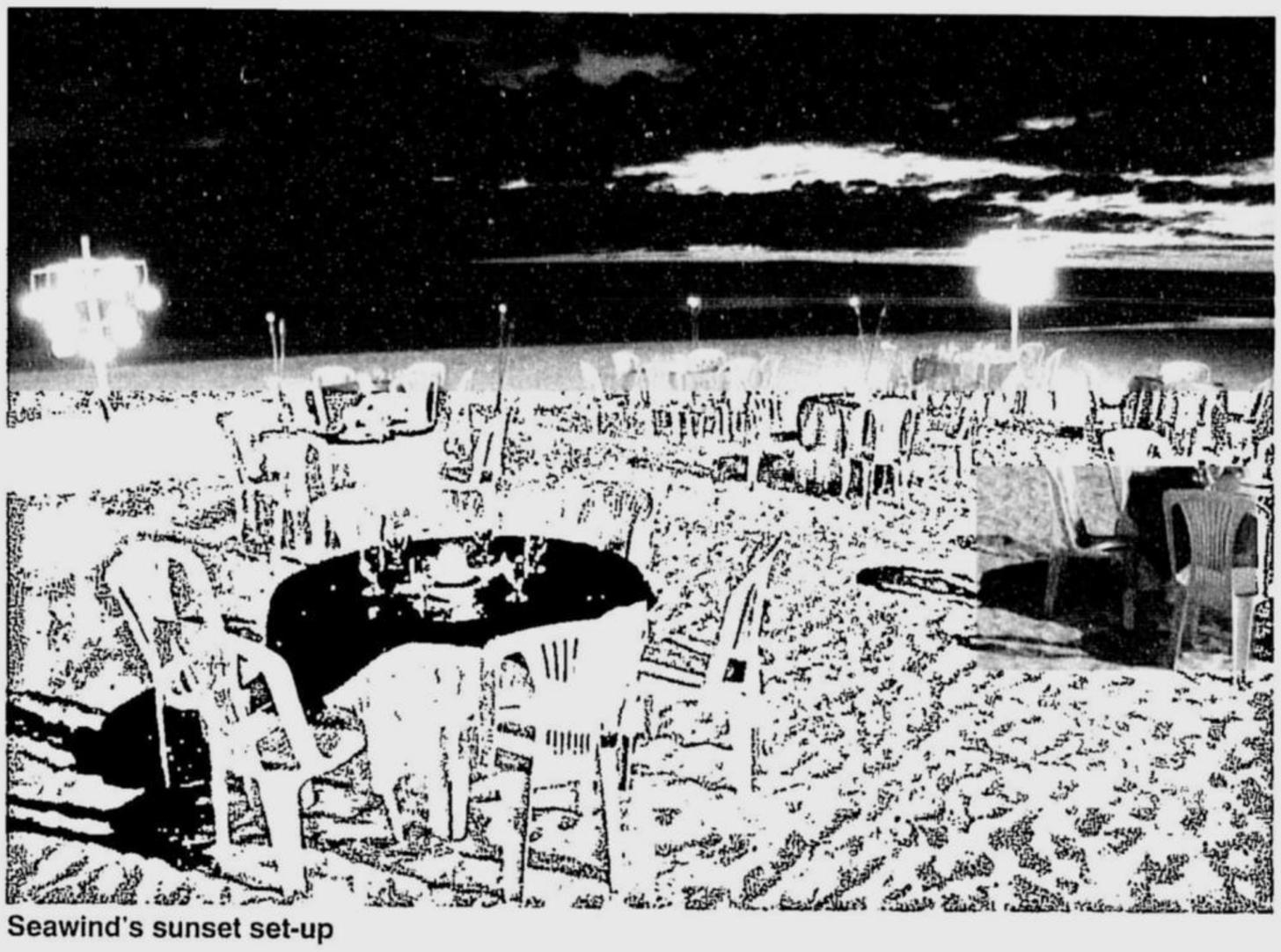
P8,950: Cost of a Wow! Magic Sing (Fiesta edition) microphone

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

By Margaux Salcedo

Bingeing in Boracay

From flavored margaritas to giant stuffed tortillas and pork liver paté topped with caviar, Bora serves up a buffet of the good life this summer



Seawind's sunset set-up

WITH the hot summer days upon us, I headed for the country's favorite white sand getaway before the Holy Week crowd takes over. Aside from sunbathing, burying my toes in the sand, and just chilling out before election fever hits, I also prowled Boracay's food row to survey the best bites in the island. So here's the lowdown for the beach-bound!

Boracay is so beautiful that when you get there, you immediately want to laze on the sand. The best way to do this is with a huge glass of the island's best margaritas. For me, this is the best welcome drink, and you will find it in a quaint Mexican restaurant fronting the beach called Mañana, located a few steps past Station 1. The place has flavored margaritas, strawberry or mango, which they serve in huge blue glasses. This is blended so well with generous proportions of the fruit that you forget you are sipping something spiked. The great thing is, you realize later on that you are having a helluva great time, and not necessarily because you've had too much to drink.

Chase the margarita down with big bites of either the Mañana Combination, which is a bowl of stuffed giant tortillas, or the Burrito Platter, which comes with two giant burritos stuffed with chicken or beef and small sides of beans and corn. These dishes, big in flavor and size, should see you through the night.

But if you have a body clock like mine whose alarm rings every two hours telling me to eat, hike over to Station 1 and catch the sunset by Seawind, the island's most prestigious resort. It offers dinner not just by, but *on* the beach and you can enjoy fresh seafood straight from Roxas City while watching the sky turn pink and various shades of purple. Enjoy the buffet offering, pointing to what you want to have grilled, the choices including fresh prawns, squid and oysters. With oysters, white sand and the sunset, how can you go wrong?

On the opposite end of the beach, over at Station 3, is another choice restaurant called Dos Mestizos. Located near the police station and tourist center, this resto, which opened November last year, is run by an Antonio Banderas lookalike named Xavy. The house specialty is the *paella* but I would recommend that you go light instead and head for the *tapas* bar. Don't skip the pork liver *paté*, something you might mistake for chocolate mousse; in fact it is liver *paté* with sour cream and caviar on top. On the main menu, make sure you try the *croquettes de quezo azul* as an appetizer. The touch of blue cheese makes for a more refined take on fried mozzarella and it is exquisitely executed.

If you are still on the go at 1 a.m., make your next stop Juice Bar in Station 2 (right beside the Boracay Regency). Juice is a modest bar with a live dj and seats on the beach. At around 3 a.m. the guests start pole dancing on the posts that hold up the roof of the bar! You clearly do not come here for the food, but I mention this place because they do serve a fine cocktail called Apple Roska as well as pretty good *mojitos*!

With these drinks and the great crowd, you will undoubtedly be partying till sunrise, at which time you're about ready for breakfast by the beach. So hold your breath in the meantime because I shall write about Boracay's best breakfasts next week. •

Seawind Resort 416-4010 or 415-1285. www. seawindbora.net. Dos Mestizos (036) 288-5786.
More Bora pictures at flickr.com/margauxlicious/

By Jasmine W. Payo
Photographs by August de la Cruz

Anchors Aweigh!

Summer sizzles as team Batang Pier, formerly the Port Masters of Harbour Centre, sets off in pursuit of the PBL championship for the third straight year

THEY had hoped to spend the long, lazy summer days in Boracay with its sunlit stretch of powdered-sugar sand and turquoise water.

But on that Monday morning, the Harbour Centre Port Masters began practice for the new conference. They've just won their second straight championship in the Philippine Basketball League (PBL) and none of them wanted to go on a slide.

For Harbour Centre main man JC Intal, the decision to pick a hardcourt hideaway over a summer getaway came quick.

"The PBL is important to us," he says. "I was supposed to go to Boracay this summer with my girlfriend and her family, but I have to be in the PBL."

Ryan Araña, the Port Masters' hyper active swingman, echoes the sentiment.

The two star teammates may have come from rival collegiate squads, but both believe that this summer may chart their future hoop career.

With the professional draft only months away, the coming PBL conference is usually the last shot for amateur hopefuls like Intal and Araña to impress the coaches and scouts of the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA).

"I'm not too confident going into the draft," admits Intal, the slam-dunking hotshot of the Ateneo Blue Eagles. "The competition in the PBL is tough. There are many good players. Everyone wants to be in the PBA. So I have to play better, work extra hard."

Araña, a former member of the La Salle Green Archers, doesn't want to put too much pressure on himself. "I plan to join the draft, but it will also depend on the results next conference. I'm not in a hurry. There's no right age to join the draft, as long as you think you're ready for the PBA," he explains. "The draft only happens once in your career, so you also have to think about the timing."

Perhaps no one knows the experience better than their veteran teammate Chico Lanete. Left undrafted last year, the 27-year-old guard still hopes to make a better impression for another crack at the pro league.

"I still want to be in the PBA that's why I've been concentrating on the PBL," says Lanete, last conference's Finals Most Valuable Player. "I'm more confident now. I've been playing back-up in past conferences, but I've started taking charge."

Edwin Asoro, a standout forward from National University, also took on the challenge to do better after a noteworthy debut during Harbour Centre's second title run. "I hope we can win another championship," he says. "I worked hard (last conference) and followed what coach Jorge (Gallent) told me to do."

Overachievers: (L to R) Jenkins Mesina, Ron Capati, Allan Gamboa, Chad Alonzo, Jay Coching, Al Vergara, Ryan Araña, Jerwin Gaco, Chico Lanete, JC Intal, Ramsey Williams

Just two summers ago, however, Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero felt quite unsure if he created the right formula in building a basketball team.

In the Port Masters' maiden stint in 2005, Romero fielded a young squad composed of A-list collegiate players. Yet the lineup that looked strong on paper didn't translate into court success in the first two conferences.

"I used to think that if you have a strong team, it's easy to win a championship. But you have to force them to work together, give them a common goal," he says.

So despite the initial setbacks, the youthful Romero continued to chase the big names in amateur hoops.

By 2006, he had built another star-studded squad bannered by two popular players from the two fiercest rival universities—Ateneo's LA Tenorio and La Salle's Joseph Yeo.

Full speed ahead: The Batang Pier already has two titles to its name

And this time, Romero's blueprint did pay off as the sixth-seeded Harbour Centre became the lowest ranked team to capture the PBL crown in last year's Unity Cup.

The Port Masters continued their overachieving ways as they bagged their second straight crown even with the departure of Tenorio and Yeo in the 2007 Silver Cup.

"I did not think that we'd achieve our goal this fast," notes Romero who, together with Gallent, seems to have gotten the recipe down pat. They banked on fresh recruits that included Intal, Asoro and Finals Pivotal Player Jonathan Fernandez. Seasoned journeymen Al Vergara, Marvin Ortiguerra, Ron Capati and Allan Gamboa also came into the mix.

"We had six to seven new players and it was back to basics for us," adds Gallent. "But we also got veterans from champion teams and they were a great help."

Notes Romero: "Basketball is a sport well-loved by Filipinos. For me, basketball is an excellent metaphor for the port business that redounds to the good of the nation. Like this hard-playing team, we want to prove through Harbour Center that the country can be an excellent player amid global competition."

As Harbour Centre hopes to begin another championship story this month, its young stars feel little trepidation.

"It has been a roller-coaster (performance) for me," says the 6-foot-4 Intal. "Everyone has stepped up. But I think I've started to adjust. The blending, camaraderie and focus are there."

"We feel confident," Araña declares. "All the teams want to beat us especially now. But I don't feel much pressure. I think the team is still strong. We have a deep bench, we can field in anyone."

While the pursuit of a third straight title remains foremost on their mind, it hasn't been that way all summer for the Port Masters.

During their two-week break, most of them hied off to the malls, bars and theme parks with family and friends. Now back on the hardcourt, Harbour Centre—which will be sporting "Batang Pier" as its new moniker—took on the floor.

Scrimmages followed the drills. A hot, sweat-filled air blanketed the gym. For these young players, the real summer has just begun. •

Quick facts about Harbour Centre Port Terminal Inc.

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• Handles domestic and foreign cargo traffic requirements, benefiting RP maritime trade and commerce

• Quay can accommodate 12 vessels at a time

• Reduces vessel turn-around time by as much as 50 percent

• Working apron of 1,115 meters for both North and South ports; back-up area can handle up to four million metric tons of breakbulk and bulk cargo, and up to 500,000 containerized cargo

• Deep draft berths with strong berthing walls

www.harbourcentre.com.ph

By Ruel S. De Vera

Just Follow the Sun

Charley Antonio's weekend bed and breakfast in Lipa, Batangas is the latest addition to the 19 stops that define Viaje del Sol's charming version of the countryside

EVER on the prowl for good ideas, Charley Antonio knew this was exactly that. The 40-year-old proprietor of the charming Charley's, a weekend-only bed and breakfast in Lipa City, Batangas, liked the idea of mapping out an odyssey of notable stops on the road from San Pablo, Laguna to Quezon province.

That idea, flattened out and lushly illustrated, became Viaje del Sol ("The Way of the Sun"), a free map that lists 19 great stops south of Manila and also shows you how to get there. Viaje del Sol is a pretty, effective testament to its creators' belief in domestic tourism.

The journey began with a pioneer in many ways. It was Patis Tesoro—yes, fashion designer Patis Tesoro—who started it all back in 2005. She ran Kusina Salud, a Filipino restaurant operating out of her country house in San Pablo, and thought that a map plotting out various discoveries and destinations would just be the thing to rev up domestic tourism. The map should easily convince local travelers about the charms of the countryside and stoke cultural pride. And that's how she got friends and acquaintances with similar concerns and businesses together, among them master potter John Pettyjohn, Boots Alcantara, Carlito Ortega, Bill Luz, Gil Carandang and Sister Emma Alday.

The map proved to be such a hit that it's now on its third version, with more sights added with each new edition--from 12 in the first map to 16 on the second and the current 19. Charley's—and thus Antonio herself—is a very recent addition, but a perfect one. A devoted scuba diver, Ma. Cecilia "Charley" Antonio is also the Vice President of the Matabungkay Beach Resort & Hotel. This mother of two holds a business management degree from Rutgers University and an MBA from the Asian Institute of Management.

Charley's the place (top), and Charley the mom (left, with children Allen and Alex)

But it is in shepherding Charley's that she finds utmost joy these days. "At Charley's, guests can enjoy the unique feel of dining in a private luxury family estate surrounded by acres of grass, tree-lined paths and roaming horses," she says, adding that their dishes are made with fresh ingredients grown onsite. "After taking their meal, guests are free to tour the estate, visit the stables, enjoy a ride on horseback or on a carabao-drawn cart," says Antonio. "Kids love this."

The complete Viaje del Sol itinerary is composed of stops at Pettyjohn Pottery (San Pablo, Laguna), La Vista Pansol (Pansol, Laguna), The Forest Club (Bay, Laguna), Colette's Buko Pie (San Pablo), Casa San Pablo, a tour of Sampaloc and Pandin Lakes (San Pablo), Pillar Plants and Novelties (San Pablo), Kusina Salud (San Pablo), Carlito's Workshop (San Pablo), Sitio de Amor (San Pablo), Villa Escudero (Laguna-Quezon boundary), Kinabuhayan Café Bed & Breakfast (Dolores, Quezon), Ugu Bigyan: Potter's Garden (Tiaong, Quezon), Earthkeeper's Garden & Restaurant (Tiaong), Casa Rap (San Jose, Batangas), Charley's (Lipa, Batangas), First Asia Institute of Technology & Humanities (Tanauan, Batangas), Tarawoods (Tanauan) and Herbana Farms (Calamba, Laguna). •

The Viaje del Sol map is available for free in all of the 19 stops. For inquiries and reservations at Charley's, please call (0920) 950-7032.

By Cora Llamas

Uncovering Agency Secrets

With hotel and tourism websites offering travelers easy access to package tours and online booking, why bother going to a travel agent at all? How do you choose a good one anyway?

A good travel agent can make even exotic destinations feel familiar, like this Istanbul market

WITH a hundred destinations on their mind, first-time travelers often wrestle with basic questions like: Where do I go? Where do I stay? What do I do once I'm there?

Often, the best response starts and ends with a travel agent. Although the Internet routinely displays ads that make it possible to make hotel and plane bookings online, a lot of people still prefer to deal with a recognizable face, a person who can take care of their specific needs beyond the multiple choices usually found in travel websites.

Helen Bartholomew, founder of 1st Stop Travel and Tours, cites other factors behind the reluctance to use the Net for travel bookings: "Your credit card may not be secure. You don't know if the online booker is legitimate. How sure are you that the voucher and confirmation you got will be honored, unless they come directly from the big players in the travel industry?" She adds: "The computer cannot discern your special needs and idiosyncracies."

Personalized customer service counts a lot, agrees Jinky Aduca, the administrative supervisor of 88DB.com, a regional website for freelancers and entrepreneurs. Aduca, who books an average of three Asian trips a month for company personnel on business trips, gets quotations (packages and costings) from at least three travel agencies before making her choice. Bottomline, should the price tags be similar, is the human touch, she says.

"Do they have a phone number or a valid e-mail?" Aduca asks. "Do they respond quickly when I call? Can I call them even on weekends, if necessary? If not, how do I know that they'll be able to assist in case there's an emergency, such as a missed flight or lost luggage?"

Ging Lee, human resources director of a multinational food franchise, goes beyond the usual company brochures to see if the agency can offer something extra. Once, in the wake of the 9/11 bombing attacks in the United States in 2001, the British Embassy raised questions about the slightly raised photo in her passport as a possible alteration. Fortunately, her travel agency resolved the matter in one day, enabling her to leave for London on the original flight. She also recalls how the agency once arranged for her to spend a few minutes in the plane's upper deck.

Says Lee: "I look for an agency that gives me value for money. Why should I pay a premium when what is being offered is information that I can normally get from a newspaper?"

Getting the extras from a travel agency means that it has a well-established and extensive network with airlines, hotels, tour operators and other players in the industry. The network ensures that everything is taken care of—from passport, visa, accommodations, airport transfers and city tours—before the passenger boards the plane.

But how do first-time travelers check if the agency is competent, or is everything that it claims to be? Lee suggests checking the agency's accreditation and relying on recommendations from friends and colleagues. "I look at the companies' track record as validated by their clients' first-hand experiences."

Aduca asks for the company profile and its list of clients. She also does her own background check. "It helps if the agency is a member of the Philippine Travel Agency Association and the International Air Transport Association," she adds.

Fortunately, says Bartholomew, cutting-edge technology remains a safeguard against fixers and those who might peddle a fake visa. Technology, she says, has made possible "embedded holograms, bar-coded visa application forms and other security measures such as biometrics which scans your retina along with your fingerprints. The information is transmitted to the embassy's database for their records. If the visa is shown to be fake, the passenger would not even be allowed into the airport in Manila. Most visa applications also require a personal appearance."

(continued on page 12)

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		3						8
	4			9			6	
1					2	3		
	6			8				
		1				2		
					7		5	
		8		5				7
	3				8		2	
5						4		

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Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 3/18

Answer to previous puzzle

7	8	6	4	5	2	1	3	9
4	9	1	6	8	3	2	5	7
5	2	3	1	7	9	4	8	6
2	3	5	9	1	7	8	6	4
9	4	8	2	3	6	7	1	5
1	6	7	8	4	5	9	2	3
8	5	4	7	6	1	3	9	2
3	7	9	5	2	8	6	4	1
6	1	2	3	9	4	5	7	8

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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sim@inquirer.com.ph

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Managing Editor: Pennie Azarcon-dela Cruz
Associate Editor: Ruel S. De Vera
Staff Writer: Eric S. Caruncho
Graphic Consultant: Paolo Viloria
Editorial Assistant: Sharon M. Felipe
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Uncovering Agency Secrets (from page 11)

Customer service is crucial as well. A travel agency must take time to sit down with customers to find out their preferences and offer them alternatives.
Says John Paul Bartholomew, 1st Stop's general manager, "We need to find out what their budget is. How many days are they spending on this tour? What sort of activities do they enjoy? Are there kids and would the parents want to leave them with nannies while they check out the sights? We look at their age. If a passenger is frail and elderly, we won't recommend places and activities that might be so exciting as to cause them a heart attack."

Telling clients how the process works also ensures that they understand the time involved and would cooperate accordingly, adds Bartholomew. "Visa processing needs roughly 15 working days. To make sure their visa application would be approved, clients might be asked to show proof that they have enough reason to return to the Philippines, such as money in the bank and a good job. Their passport must also show that they're well-traveled. We also advise clients to get medical insurance, otherwise, they could get billed up to three times the normal medical costs if they're taken ill in a foreign country."

If kids are part of the trip, travel agents must be able to anticipate their needs

There are also little known but vital regulations that good travel agents must warn their clients about. Says Mrs. Bartholomew: "We advise clients against bringing counterfeit items from the Third World to the First World like DVDs, software, designer wallets, bags, and clothes. If customs inspectors abroad find these things in your stuff, they can immediately deport you if you're not a citizen. In France, they can charge you ten times the price of the original items or send you to jail."

She cites an actual case: "A Filipina friend of mine who is a US citizen was held at the San Francisco airport for having imitation Guccis in her luggage. The customs personnel seized all the contraband products and made her sign some documents. After a week, she received several letters from Gucci asking where she got the items. She had no choice but to comply."

Giving their clients access to critical information that could spell their safety and well-being, as well as timely updates on relevant travel information, are other hallmarks of an efficient travel agency, adds Mrs. Bartholomew. •

By Joyce Ramirez

How to be a Star by Really, Really Trying

What do you do when Bora becomes boring? Join the latest Reality TV show, natch! Here's how

DO you have what it takes to become a star on Reality TV?

Outrageous situations, low production costs and thousands of voyeurs out there have guaranteed a viable niche for the Reality TV format in today's entertainment scene. Blame Paris Hilton, the countless blogs and YouTube videos but suddenly, privacy has gone out of style.

If all the bitching, sniping and backstabbing among Reality TV contestants haven't dampened your dream of stardom yet, here are a few tips to put you on the shortlist of the next casting call of your favorite Bitcharama.

1.Unlike the typical showbiz route, most reality shows don't require any special skills or talent except perhaps a thick hide and pure guts. Of course it doesn't hurt to look good, but if you don't have stunning, model-perfect looks, you can always bank on your personality to carry you through auditions and onto the show. Emphasize what makes you unique rather than dwell on your physical shortcomings. Casting directors are often on the lookout for faces that will diversify their cast.

2. Drama makes for a good reality show, but again, diversity works. Even non-confrontational types have a chance because producers always find a way to highlight differences to make situations excessively dramatic.

AXN Asia

The Amazing Race Asia teams sprint for it

3.While it may help to have connections since friends in the industry could sing your praises and push your chances, it's not absolutely necessary. Casting directors are constantly looking for new faces. Rather than connections, you need patience and a fighting spirit to search for roles to fit you.

In choosing participants for "The Amazing Race Asia 2," SPE Networks Asia General Manager, Ricky Ow reveals that applicants are required to submit a three-minute audition video "so we can get a glimpse of the relationship between you and your partner. We will be looking out for the X-factor in you and your drive to be a champion in this race."

But what really happens behind the scenes? Do contestants ever get to shake off the cameras? Did they really say those terrible things, or were they coaxed into spilling their guts? In an exclusive **SIM** interview, Ow reveals what goes on when the cameras stop grinding:

1. **Who chooses the contestants and how are they chosen?**
In a reality show, there are no limits! Contestants do not necessarily have to be athletic or modelesque to qualify, but charisma and the X-factor are certainly crucial aspects that we notice.

Participants must also be able to speak English and enjoy experiencing different cultures because the teams race through several foreign countries for an entire month. Of course, being smart also helps.

2. **What are the producers' obligations to the contestants? Does editing bring out the worst in the contestants to up the ratings?**
As "The Amazing Race" executive producer Bertram Van Munster says about contestants on the show, "If you have a camera around you 24 hours a day, your true personality will come out. It's impossible to fake who you are."

3. **Among the contestants, has there been a violation of rules and what happens next?**
If you watched the first season of "The Amazing Race Asia," you'd know that one team was eliminated as a result of a time penalty meted out for flouting the rules of the race.

At the start of the race, the contestants are informed of the rules and what they can and cannot do on the show. After investing so much time and energy in securing a coveted spot in the race, contestants surely would not want to be eliminated so easily.

4. **Have there been instances when on-screen conflicts among contestants carry over to real life? Are there friendships that continue after the show?**
Definitely there will be on-screen conflicts that carry on behind the scenes because the camera captures all the REAL drama of friendship and friction among contestants.

At the same time, contestants have solidified lifetime friendships on the race. They are nice to one another during their downtime and have made

(continued on page 15)

Rehydration High

How to soak in the sun without suffering sunburn, heat stroke and dehydration.

WITH the sun bathing us in its unrelenting golden glow. summer has always been the perfect time for family outings, beach escapades and outdoor sports.
But having a great time often makes us forget that too much sun exposure can spell sunburn, heat stroke and dehydration.

Yes, the body is composed mostly of water, but sweating out most of it without any replacement can lead to dire consequences.

Water is lost primarily through vomiting, sweating and diarrhea—especially when improper handling and heat results in spoiled food during picnics and outings. When this happens, the body loses not just water, but also essential salts and electrolytes that need to be replaced.

But whether you sweat because you work out or simply because you stay out of the shade, here are a few things to remember:

1) The top three causes of dehydration are gastro-intestinal illnesses, engaging in sports, and dieting. Anything that messes with your stomach will lead to a massive loss of water, while sports is predicated on the whole idea of losing "water weight." The same concept is often a key element in many diets. Similarly, laxatives can lead to dehydration.

2) The symptoms of dehydration are chapped lips, dryness in the mouth, clammy skin and dizziness. The longer someone engaging in a sport remains dehydrated, the larger the chance that cramps will follow. That's because water distributes the oxygen to the muscles when one is engaged in activity.

Water and energy drinks are the best choices to keep the balance of fluids inside the body

3) Young children and the elderly are more at risk of dehydration because they tend to lose electrolytes more rapidly than an adult.

4) The best precaution is to drink lots of fluids. It is particularly important to take in lots of water during days prior to a strenuous activity.

5) Keep drinking. Water or sports drinks are the best choices. It is also crucial to continue drinking during any kind of activity done under the sun or one that requires exertion. One should take in fluids even before one feels thirsty.

6) Drink some more after any strenuous activity. Once you're back in the shade or the ride is over, drink again. You lose water constantly and in the end, replenishing lost nutrients is easier because the body has now ceased sweating so much.

7) Avoid coffee. Caffeine is a diuretic, which makes you urinate and thus lose more water. This is the last thing you need when you're trying to keep a proper balance of fluids inside your body. •

Unspeakable acts on international TV

Do you have what it takes to punish yourself before millions of viewers? Is this any way to spend summer?

THEY'VE had to scoop dung and slap it into a wall, eat unidentifiable animal parts and lug around sacks of chili under a scorching sun. Racing across sodden fields, riding a smelly camel, and hopping into a bus for places they can't even pronounce, participants in "The Amazing Race Asia 1" definitely kept viewers glued to their set long enough for AXN, the producers, to consider a sequel.

Says Ricky Ow, general manager of SPE Networks-Asia: "The first 'The Amazing Race Asia' was a runaway success. Even before Season 1 ended, viewers were already calling in to ask if they could send in their entries. So we are opening it for casting earlier this time so as to find the best cast possible."

Now's your chance to torture yourself before millions of viewers and hopefully earn a million dollars for it. Or at the very least, race to glory as the country's representative to this Emmy Award-winning show. Here's how:

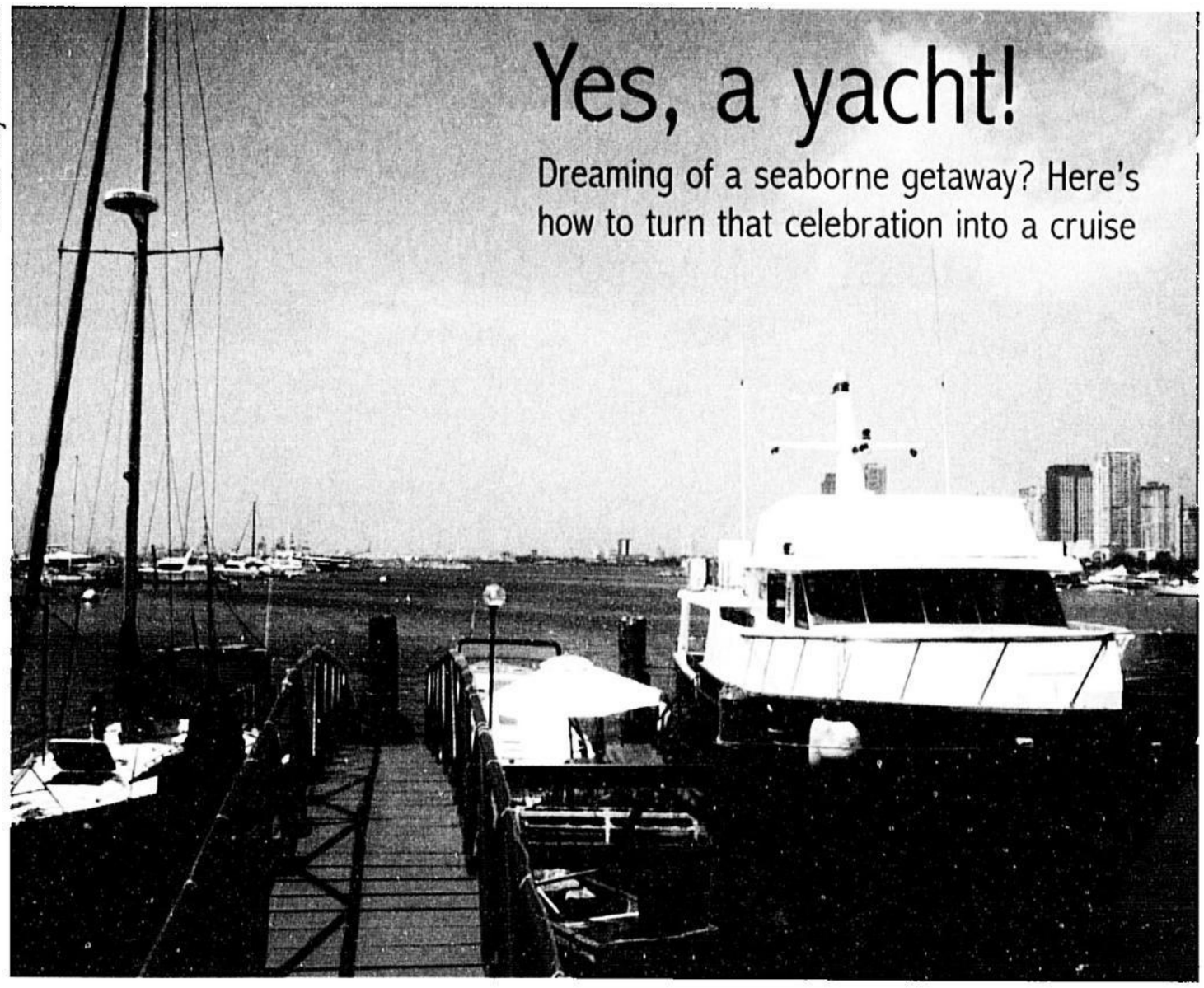
• If you're living and/or working in Asia (excluding Australia, New Zealand, and the Middle East), are 21 and above, speak English and has both a valid driving license and an international passport, you can submit your application in teams of two.

• Entry forms can be downloaded from www.axn-asia.com, and need to be sent in together with a three-minute video to the address stated on the website.

• All information on the race can be found on www.axn-asia.com. Enquiries can be addressed to Amazing_Race_Asia@axn-asia.com.

• Registration will close on March 30, 2007. •

Eddie Boy Escudero



Yes, a yacht!

Dreaming of a seaborne getaway? Here's how to turn that celebration into a cruise

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So sail away and enjoy that glitzy birthday bash with loads of bubbly, or a warm, fun-filled family outing while savoring the changing scenery. Check out yacht sizes and images at www.geocities.com/party_yacht. For inquiries call Realship Corp. at 832-5424 or 0917-5212944.•

How to be a Star by Really, Really Trying (from page 13)

great friends with fellow contestants. But once they are out there on their own, they smell the competition and the claws start showing!

5. **What are the most common complaints among contestants?**
The lack of sleep and living on an adrenalin rush 24/7 for an entire month were probably what the contestants expected, but no amount of preparation can prepare them mentally and physically as there were too many unknowns and uncertainties.

At the elimination mat, we too have heard of teams griping about lady luck. Sometimes it seems that even the smartest and physically strong teams can do their best and still lose out on their unlucky days. For instance, Ernie and Jeena Lopez in "The Amazing Race Asia 1" headed straight for a Fast Forward but were beaten to it by Sahil and Prashant because of bad navigation by their taxi driver, and were thus eliminated in that episode. It just shows that in a race, anything can happen.

6. **What is the primary source of the producers biggest headache?**
"The Amazing Race Asia" is a global race and it can be a logistical nightmare. In season one, we covered over 36,000 kilometres and 15 cities in less than a month. We had to coordinate the movement of over a ton of equipment each time we travelled. In fact we had to move a minimum of 65 people every one and a half days!

7. **How do you deal with curious onlookers and crowd? How about security problems in some countries?**
We have to keep a low profile—that's why all participants need to sign a confidentiality agreement. We also have security people who work with local authorities to ensure the safety of the crew and contestants in the countries that they visit.

8. **How far ahead is the pre-taping of the shows?**
The show is produced three to four months before the premiere.

9. **What does it take to win?**
Brains, determination, and as some contestants from Season One will say, sometimes it is just carefully reading the clues given.

10. **What are the show's expectations from the chosen contestants?**
Chosen contestants have to remain tight-lipped about their participation in the race from the time they are informed of their selection till AXN makes the official announcement on the teams. They are not allowed to tell anyone, including even friends and family, on what happened on the race, and especially about the results.

This is a reality competition, and viewers are glued to the show to find out what happens and who wins the race, so there is a heavy price to pay for divulging confidential information that will affect the surprise, tension and outcome of the program for the viewing public.

11. **What's your advice to Filipino fans on how to make it as a contestant?**
Find a partner who you think can survive a month of intense competition, someone who ignites your personality and vice-versa. Get a video camera and start practicing how you want to show your quirky relationship in just three minutes. We'll be waiting! •

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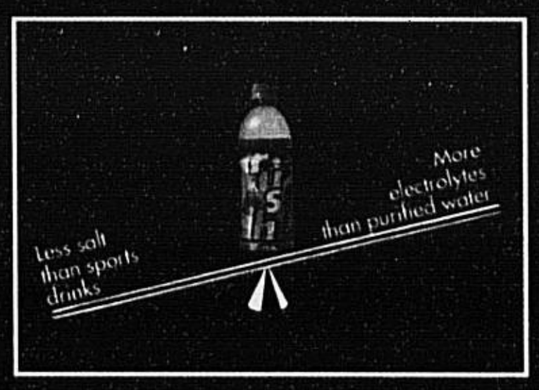

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